
TOTAL FILM
MAY 2016
ISSUE 244
THE WORLD'S BEST MOVIE REVIEWS
SPELLBINDING!
THE 10 COOLEST MOVIES
COMING YOUR WAY...
STARRING
Fantastic Beasts
And Where To Find Them
+
SUICIDE SQUAD
DC's non-PC crew
ASSASSIN'S CREED
Fassbender's got game
GHOSTBUSTERS
Girls vs ghouls
Plus
MARGOT ROBBIE
NATALIE PORTMAN
MATT DAMON
TINA FEY...
EMILIA CLARKE
Talking to Miss Targaryen
HELEN MIRREN
Yes, Ma'am!
JAKE GYLLENHAAL
Gets destructive
Future



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May 2016 Issue 244

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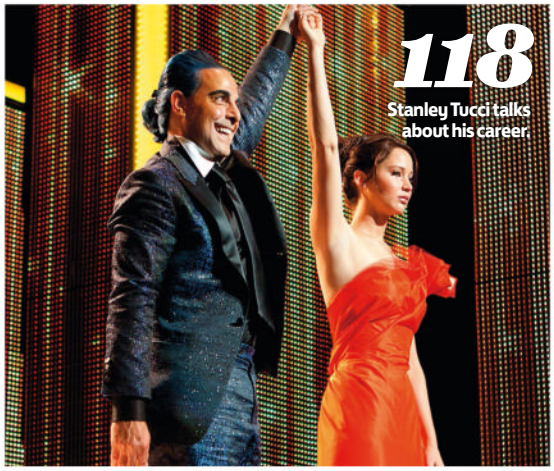
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dialogue

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Cool runnings

When it comes to picking our 10 Coolest Movies there's always fisticuffs. Are we judging on achingly hip obscurity or tingly-feeling razzle-dazzle? Or indeed, stuff that's physically filmed in chilly environs. Well, all of the above – we're curating a list that we feel will make most cinemagoers nod approvingly while whispering 'ah, yes...cool' at the mere mention of its content. Which is why big-budget behemoths Fantastic Beasts and Assassin's Creed are jostling for place alongside the quirky Captain Fantastic, girl-power Ghostbusters, under-the-radar Linklater, the zeitgeist-y The Girl On The Train and Russell Crowe knocking seven bells out of Ryan Gosling. All movies that should be giving you an ice-cream headache just reading about them. (And gave us a headache narrowing down.) Enjoy the issue.

Jane

JANE CROWTHER
EDITOR



***A Bigger Splash* made a big splash with one unwary *TF* reader.**

STAR LETTER

It was my wife's turn this week a film to pick/So I feared another romcom or chick flick/She said: "Let's go and see *A Bigger Splash*!"/What's this, some Tom Hanks-Daryl Hannah rehash?/But no... This had the same torque as *Sexy Beast*/ This fiery quartet seared with a lavish Italian feast/Barnstorming Ralph Fiennes strutting his stuff around/Tilda Swinton magnificent without a sound/At this rate my beloved can choose every week/Oh no, I've just remembered *Crimson Peak*!

DAVEY WARWICK, VIA EMAIL

Thanks for your missive/Do give our regards to the missus/She sounds the sort of person/Who'd pick you a winner at the Curzon/But lucky for you this wasn't TF*243/when everyone got* Crimson Peak *for free. Davey and everyone with a letter printed here will receive a copy of* The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2, *available 21 March on DVD, Blu-ray, 3D, Steelbook and Digital HD via Lionsgate Home Entertainment. Didn't send an address? Email it! 'Nothing can prepare you for the end!' Apart from watching the previous three, obvs.*





"You stupid time traveller!"

Puffer piece

After checking out the photo on page 49 of issue 243, I think I've stumbled on the true German spy that Captain Mainwaring and his loveable platoon tried to find in *Dad's Army*. He's wearing an authentic 1940s blue puffer jacket and baseball cap (just to the left of Mainwaring's head). P.S. Daniel Mays plays spivvy Walker, not spivvy Wilson! Take your reviewer's name for that one.

AUSTIN SLASSOR, VIA EMAIL

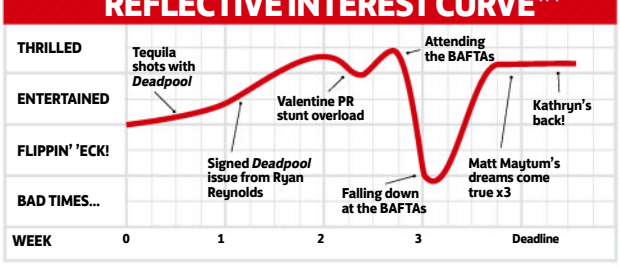
Clearly we were hoping the picture gaffe would distract from the name gaffe, and vice versa. But that's not a puffer he's wearing... It's a photo-bomber jacket! We're here all week.

>>

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The ups and downs of making this issue...

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dialogue

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Leia before Leia. Earl-eia, even.

Force majeure

Regarding Simon Elliott's letter [TF*243*] on how he loves J.J. Abrams' work on *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, but we should just admit that "all he did" was remake *A New Hope*... Let's not, shall we? Let's really not. Yes, there are similar elements along the way which anyone on Reddit can feel clever by listing. However, the heart of the film, and the driving force (pun intended) behind its events are its new leads, who are wonderfully fresh and fascinating. Their relationship with the world of *Star Wars*, its past, and the returning old guard both cast this new trilogy (and the original trilogy) in a new light. And anyone who came out of the cinema thinking that the climax of *The Force Awakens* was the big base blowing up (as opposed to, y'know, the Force awakening) needs more practice in following a story!

TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, VIA EMAIL

I was relaxing in front of the TV watching 1969 western *Death Of A Gunfighter* when I saw something I couldn't believe. There talking with Richard Widmark was Princess Leia, complete with hair buns. It was in fact Jacqueline Scott sporting a Leia hairstyle, but I wonder, is Leia related to cow folk?

CARL HOWARD, LOWESTOFT

Well, her bro Luke was a 'moisture farmer' – something that sounds like a euphemism lover's wet, um, dream – so it's not beyond the realms of possibility.Can certainly see Carrie Fisher fending off Imperial rustlers with a cattle prod. Yes, J.J. did much more than cut and paste – though with Episode VIII *now being lensed, we need to start speculating on what* Empire Strikes Back *homages/riffs/reversals to expect: Chewie turns green and starts talking backwards? Simon Pegg is someone's dad? BB-8 gets his Zippo hand lopped off?*

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'Should we admit that J.J. just remade A New Hope? Let's not.'

Where's Willis?

I very much enjoyed your article The 33 Unlikeliest Action Heroes [TF*242*] but was surprised you didn't have Bruce Willis in there. You must remember that before *Die Hard* he was considered that idiot from *Moonlighting* and the idea of him as an action hero was laughable. Also, wouldn't it

OFFICE SPACED

Chatter 'gems' overheard in the *Total Film* office this month...

"Paul Rudd in *Friends* to me is what Zooey Deschanel is to you." **"Have you egg-proofed everything?"** "Imagine having £6m in your ears." **"I used to do the Backwards Caterpillar. I couldn't do it forwards."**



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SUICIDE SQUAD: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
http://www.gamesradar.com/suicide-squad-review/
Get up to speed on the anti-*Justice League* with our guide to the forthcoming DC blockbuster – including profiles of every single *Squad*-er from Captain Boomerang to Killer Croc.



THE 25 BEST OSCAR-WINNING MOVIES
http://www.gamesradar.com/best-oscar-winning-movies/
If the recent Academy Awards has left you fancying some prize pics, then have a click through our list of the 25 finest Best Picture winners. Sorry you didn't make the cut, *Miss Daisy*...



THE 10 BEST HITCHCOCK MOVIES OF ALL TIME
http://www.gamesradar.com/best-hitchcock-movies/
The master of suspense made 53 films; we've picked an essential 10. Feel free to applaud our discernment/disagree violently via the usual social channels...

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FAKE ARM OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/701796185695244289
"Severed body part for delivery," the email said. "Oh go on, then," we said. And lo, this gore-slathered rubbery appendage turned up, promoting Bernard Rose's *Frankenstein* on Blu-ray.



VALENTINE GIFTS OF THE MONTH
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/698144410559778817
We were spoilt for Valentine presents this year – but the folks releasing FrightFest fave *Nina Forever* on home-ent sent us the biggest box of chocs, so they win.



KINDERGARTEN COP 2 TRAILER: YOU RESPOND
https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/700063564267188224
"Good production on this April Fool. It is an April Fool right?" (@TheWaster); "Better than *Force Awakens*" (@alan_pez_perrie); "I think The Dolph had a tax bill to pay" (@myfirstraygun)

TV REVIEWS GAMESRADAR.COM/TV



We live in a golden age of comic-book adaps; not only at the flicks but on the gogglebox too. Check out our sister mag *SFX*'s guide to all the super-shows coming your way at www.gamesradar.com/comic-book-tv-shows/, including the latest Marvel/Netflix team-up, *Luke Cage* (left).

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be interesting to do an article about actors who didn't make the grade, like Seth Rogen in *The Green Hornet*, Matthew Modine in *Cutthroat Island*, Adrien Brody in *Predators* or Brandon Routh in *Superman Returns*? In some cases these moves have been career killers. I'm sure you can think of more.

DOC ANARCHY, VIA EMAIL

We did consider such an article but decided against taking such a negative slant. Nor did we want Sean Penn coming after us for saying The Gunman *sucked Kong-sized you-know-whats. Talking of Penn, he was originally set to star in 1987 romcom* Blind Date*, which instead became the big-screen breakout for one Bruce Willis, before he donned the action singlet. As you say, he was more Die Laughing than* Die Hard *back then; mind you,* Blind Date*'s premise – woman goes feral after she's had a few – plays more meninist horror than chuckle-fest.*

Take cover

In issue 243's On Demand section you reviewed *Spice World: The Movie*. As a child this was actually the first movie I saw... Sadly, ha ha! Anyway, the review mentioned that you once had Posh Spice on the cover and after searching the internet for hours I was unable to find anything, or indeed the cover. Was this is a joke? And if not, where can I find it? Any help would be very much appreciated.

OWEN DAVIES, VIA EMAIL



In the words of one H. Solo, it's true – all of it. Take a look at Exhibit A, which we found lining the Rancor's cot in the TF *basement, alongside John Cleese doing a rat face (issue 2), the Wardrobe from* The Chronicles Of Narnia *(issue 109), Mr Creosote (issue 26) and nightmare-hair Tom Hanks/Brad Pitt in the Devil's vest (issue 86). No, Posh in a state of Andress wasn't our finest hour; we were young, we were naive and clearly should've gone with Baby Spice as Nick Nack.*

So hot right now

Don't know about you, but for my money the 'Best Lighting' Oscar should go to the sun for *The Revenant*.

ALEX COLLIER, DURHAM

Yes, it certainly was the star of that film. And didn't Mother Nature do a smashing job with the production design? And the Grim Reaper really went above and beyond when it came to the costume design of Leo's Dead Horse Onesie.

Rights Club

Now that Disney owns Marvel, can we have the following crossovers? *Ghost Rider Vs Herbie*; *Thor Vs Dragon Slayer*; *Iron Man Vs Tron*; *Deadpool Vs Power Rangers*; *Silver Surfer Vs The Black Hole*. P.S. *Dad's Army* was a good film, but Captain Mainwaring was miscast. Del Boy would've been better.

A. HANNA, CO. ARMAGH

You've got the green light from us, but given the rights issues involved in some of those, you're more likely looking at Lawyers Vs Lawyers *being first out the gate.*

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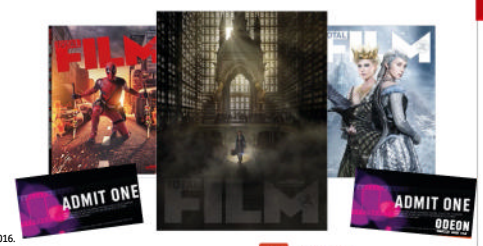
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TOTAL FILM

What's your favourite movie beast? Tell us yours at @totalfilm #tfbeast!

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Welcome to the movies!

buzz

EDITED BY **JORDAN FARLEY**





‘It’s going to blow people’s minds’
CHLOË GRACE MORETZ

Muscle man: Seth Rogen and clan (inset) aren’t too pleased with the local party scene.

FIRST LOOK!

Girl trouble

BAD NEIGHBOURS 2

Seth Rogen and Zac Efron return to the neighbourhood for some Chloë-brow humour...

Sharpen your dildos, stoke up a doobie and steel yourself for some serious abs envy. Two years after director Nicholas Stoller scored a ribald breakout hit with his Neighbour-ly original, the *Bad Neighbours* are back. And this time, Hit-Girl is turning the party weapons-grade.

The main crew return, primarily Rose Byrne and Seth Rogen as Kelly and Mac Radner, the squares who aren’t hip to the raging kegger next door. Zac Efron returns too, out to redeem himself after *Dirty Grandpa* and removing his top at every opportunity (as you would). Except this time, Efron’s Teddy has turned: the Radners request his help when a sorority moves in next door and all Chloë Grace Moretz breaks loose, making *Spring Breakers* look like *The Little Mermaid*.

Core Breaker Selena Gomez is also on hand, though it looks like she’ll play good to the real party animal here. After an earnest YA slump (*If I Stay*, *The 5th Wave*), Moretz is swinging back to badass: “I think people are going to be surprised to see that side of me,” she says. “What goes down in *Neighbours 2* is going to blow people’s minds.”

Promising talk coming from Hit-Girl, though Rogen’s models for cracking the comedy sequel curse (a moment for *Zoolander 2*, please) were pleasingly high-grade: Pixar and Marvel. “It really is about, what’s the next logical chapter? It seems to be what those movies do well,” he says. “They’re really looking forward.”

Not that *Neighbours*-watchers need worry: the trailer suggests new and re-pumped old gags will be mixed if it helps to get a rise. “If it worked with guys,” says Mac of the airbag trick and, by implication, the whole film: “why won’t it work for girls?” Let’s hope they found the perfect blend. **KH**

ETA | 6 MAY *Bad Neighbours 2* opens in spring.



Schoolhouse rock: Ferdia Walsh-Peelo leads the vocal young cast.

EXCLUSIVE!

School's out

SING STREET | Dancing shoes at the ready for John Carney's latest feel-good musical...

Sometimes a story comes out of nowhere, and sometimes you have to live it first. That's essentially what happened with *Sing Street*, the third film from *Once* director John Carney.

An '80s-set Irish musical that's both a coming-of-ager and a bona fide foot-stomper, it follows 15-year-old schoolboy Cosmo (Ferdia Walsh-Peelo) as he forms a band to impress his crush, enigmatic older girl Raphina (Lucy Boynton). It's also set at the same Synge Street School Carney attended in Dublin as a child – he even went back there to make the film.

"It was amazing going back to all those scenes of so many little disasters and personal catastrophes, then actually having the triumph of making a film," he tells *Buzz*. "If I'd thought of it as a kid, if somebody had said, 'You'll be back here shooting a film in this very spot,' I kind of wouldn't have believed it. When you're actually doing it, you go, 'It's just a building.' All the ghosts are gone."

Not that the film's entirely autobiographical. "It's more like a scrappy, slightly faded diary of the period," Carney says, adding that the real inspiration for *Sing Street* came when, shortly after making *Once*, he was sitting on a train and spotted a schoolboy carrying a guitar: "I remember the juxtaposition of the school uniform and the bass. Those two things looking slightly incongruous together."

Forming his own band and composing "eight or nine" original songs for the film, Carney succeeds in making *Sing Street* every bit as emotionally affecting as *Once* – though his motivation isn't plucking heart strings. "I'm not a very emotional person," he admits. "It's a strange one, people felt the same way about *Once*. The films I make are more emotional than I am as a person..." **JW**

ETA | 22 APRIL ***Sing Street*** **opens next month.**

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Funny people

Comedy heroes on what makes them laugh. This month: **Jimmy Carr**



Name: *Jimmy Carr*
Job: *Comedian, actor, writer*
Films/TV: Confetti, Telstar: The Joe Meek Story, Alex Rider: Stormbreaker, Alien Autopsy
Upcoming: Funny Business



MY COMEDY PAST
I did a thing with Martin Freeman and Olivia Coleman years ago called **CONFETTI**, an entirely improvised film – to the extent that the catering was improvised. Debbie Isitt, the director, let us do what we wanted. She was like the fun teacher where I'm not sure whether a slightly stricter teacher could have got better results, but we had a bloody good laugh.



THE MOVIE THAT MAKES ME CRY WITH LAUGHTER
TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE. It's just so brilliant. Nothing the matter with that movie. I love the scene when he says, "You may get caught. You may need to take your own life. Here, take this." You think he's going to pass across some pills or cyanide, but he gives him a hammer with blood and hair all over it. It's just brutal.



MY FAVOURITE FUNNY MOVIE
I suppose the perfect comedy movie is **LIFE OF BRIAN**. That's the best. Every detail of it. I read Michael Palin's diaries and then went back and watched it again. You sort of realise, it's just 12 brilliant sketches in a row but the storyline is very familiar and you kind of know what the tropes are in that style of movie, so you can just sit back and enjoy it.



MY MOST SURPRISING COMEDIAN
I got to work with Martin Freeman, and I can attest to the fact he is hilarious. He's a really funny bloke, as well as being brilliant. And **HUGH GRANT** is one of the funniest men I've met who isn't a stand up. He's never done stand up, but he should. He's brilliantly comedically gifted. Just in conversation, he's just a really funny guy. Great at telling stories.



MY UNDERRATED COMEDY PERFORMER
There are a couple of bits in **TRUE ROMANCE**, probably my favourite movie of all time, which I think are very comedic. It depends on how you read them. The Brad Pitt character in *True Romance*, that's underrated comic genius. He just throws it away. He's almost not there. And it's Brad Pitt. Just brilliantly funny, gets me laughing.



MY FAVOURITE CURRENT COMEDY PERFORMER
I think **KEVIN HART** is just an incredible star. In every movie that he's ever in, he's so watchable and funny and light. *The Wedding Ringer* is such a great little comedy movie. The *Ride Along* movies are really good. He's the full package. **JM**

ETA | 18 MARCH ***Funny Business*** **streams on Netflix this month.**

Listen Up, Hollywood

This month, the newly announced **Deadpool 2**. Buzz pitches four fourth-wall-breaking ideas.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEADPOOL

Taking a cue from an as-yet untapped *Marvel Zombies* comic, Deadpool gets infected by the zombie plague and becomes the Merc with Half a Mouth. Eventually, his body would succumb to some horribly violent misfortune, but his healing abilities would allow him to survive as just a head, known as Headpool. This isn't even made up. This actually happens in the comics.

DROP DEAD FREDPOOL

With a rumoured remake of the Rik Mayall film on the way, why not combine the two and position Wade Wilson as an imaginary friend taunting and testing the patience of a now-adult comic book reader? It's the perfect set-up for Deadpool's anarchic brand of humour and meta commentary. Plus, he's sure to point out what a terrible idea this is, which makes it a great one.

DON'T TELL MOM THE BABYSITTER'S DEADPOOL

A comedy caper in true early-'90s fashion. What would happen if you took Deadpool out of his comic book world entirely and put him in charge of five kids for the summer? With children and superpowered killer anti-hero all forced to band together, the result will be a hilarious mismatch of farcical misunderstandings and extreme bloodshed.

DREDDPOOL

Comic book crossovers are all the rage, so it makes perfect sense for these two anti-heroes to team-up for a joint R-rated adventure. Following the Merc with a Mouth's antics in the first film, Karl Urban's Dredd is called out to bring him in for judgment, resulting in a franchise-spanning showdown. Deadpool will, of course, spend the entire time doing "I am the lawgh" Stallone impressions. **ML**



REX



‘I love when things go to the limits of your imagination’

Between takes

Lauren Cohan talks creepy dolls, Bat-cameos and thinking outside this dimension...

What drew you to the *The Boy*?
There’s a couple of really big twists in the film that I didn’t see coming. It was pretty disturbing knowing I’d have to go into all those dark headspaces as Greta, but that’s also what spoke to me. I do have a predilection for this masochistic genre!

How does the horror of *The Boy* compare to *The Walking Dead*?
Doing our show, obviously it’s similar, but I don’t think there’s anything that compares to doing a horror movie. You get to push the limit in the story if you know where you start and where you end.

What was Brahms, the doll, like as a co-star?
I’m very creeped out by dolls, but it’s strange to me how Brahms took on a life of his own – people loved him. All of acting is just belief to the point where you’re holding onto real feelings and real emotions. It’s obviously a bit easier with humans, I will say that.

Brahms visited your own home for a day. Did you experience any strange happenings?
I think I needed a bit of an antidote to all the creepiness! I posted a bunch of pictures of him making smoothies and drinking coffee, I went a little bit crazy with it. You should have seen the looks I was getting in the gym.

You also have a role in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*. How did that come about?
Zack Snyder asked me to be involved with it. I can’t really say who I am in the film right now because it’s supposed to be a big reveal! I was flying on the red-eye to Chicago overnight in the snow, and then flying back to Atlanta, so I had four days where I didn’t sleep at all. Totally worth it by the way, it’s going to be crazy cool.

Are you a superhero fan?
Yes. I’m actually not a big comic book reader, but I love comic-book movies. I love when things go to the absolute limits of your imagination. I think that’s why I’ve ended up doing so much supernatural fare, I like thinking outside this dimension. **JF**

ETA | 18 MARCH *The Boy* opens this month.

MJ KIM / GETTY IMAGES PORTRAIT

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Not a nap: things are getting creepy in *The Conjuring 2*'s London council house...

BEHIND THE SCENES

Scare tactics

THE CONJURING 2 | Demon-fighting duo Ed and Lorraine Warren return for a chilling sequel relocated to North London.

James Wan's '70s-set spooker *The Conjuring* introduced paranormal investigating couple Ed and Lorraine Warren (Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga). Now, for the sequel, Wan and the Warrens head to Enfield to check out a little girl possessed and a very creepy chair. Producers Peter Saffran and Rob Cowan give us the lowdown.



PROBLEM CHILD

"It's 1977, England. They live in Enfield on a Council estate," Saffran explains. "Strange goings on start to occur. Ed and Lorraine are called in by Father Gordon, and he plays them a tape of 'Old Bill'. He asks them, 'What do you think of this tape?' Ed says, 'It certainly sounds disturbing. I think he's probably senile.' Father Gordon says, 'That's a 12-year-old girl.'"



PRACTICAL MAGIC

"Going back to the '70s style of filmmaking, we'd rather not rely on CGI. When there's less CGI, it feels more real to the audience," Cowan asserts. "So we stuck with things like moving furniture, as opposed to stuff flying through the air. We really tried to stick with things that are practical. It is a challenge, but it's a challenge people have fun with."



SPOOK CENTRAL

"So far, we've had weird little things happen," Cowan reveals. "We were shooting a scene in the back yard and the lightning just kept going off. I went to the guy and he said, 'I'm not even sure it's plugged in right now.' But we had to bring the rig down because it wouldn't stop. It was just going off on its own." **RF**

ETA | 17 JUNE ***The Conjuring 2*** **opens this summer.**

TAKE OUR ADVICE

Can you guess the recent movies from our 'alternative' consumer advice?

Contains really, really ridiculously good-looking models.

Contains extreme bear hugs and blatant Oscar-grabbing.

Contains old folks and older jokes at war. Don't panic though.

Contains scenes of excessive Bayhem, explosions and obscene facial hair.

Contains extreme sports performed by men who are young, dumb and full of... enthusiasm.

Contains cringeworthy OAP behaviour and a legend's career-low. ML

Answers: *Zoolander 2, The Revenant, Dad's Army, 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers Of Benghazi, Point Break, Dirty Grandpa*



ON SET

Riot act

BASTILLE DAY | Idris Elba hits the streets of Paris.

As Buzz descends on the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich on a freezing cold December morning, the grounds are deceptively serene.

In fact, anybody passing by would never know that, at the heart of the site, there are hundreds of angry protesters baying for blood, facing off against police in full riot gear, ready to break out into a scene of full-on mayhem.

The college is doubling for a Paris bank during the climactic sequence of new action thriller *Bastille Day*, starring Idris Elba and *Game Of Thrones* star Richard Madden. Set against the backdrop of civil unrest (hence the terrifying mob), Madden plays American pickpocket Michael Mason, who steals a bag from French radical Zoe (Charlotte Le Bon) only to find that it contains a bomb, which then detonates at a Metro station. Suddenly becoming the chief suspect in a criminal plot, Mason finds himself pursued by embittered CIA agent Sean Briar (Elba). Then, in a twist of circumstances, Sean, Michael and Zoe all find themselves on the brink of exposing a much bigger conspiracy.

"In terms of the look of the film, it's closer to a 1970s street thriller, but I suspect in terms of the tone of the film, it's closer in experience to something like *48 Hours*." says director James Watkins (*The Woman In Black*, *Eden Lake*). "There's a buddy-ish relationship there. I think of it as similar to films like *Dirty Harry* or *Midnight Run*. Idris' character is very tough but the film has this humour to it between [*Sean and Michael*] and to me that's the beating heart of the movie."

With bombs and violent protests at play in the film though, there's clearly a topical element to this thriller and the real-life Paris attacks last November gave the studio enough cause for concern to push back its release by a couple of months. Watkins is keen to clarify: "The film is set in Paris and we shot it well in advance of all those horrible events, but the fact that it is a film that has got violence on the streets of Paris made everybody sensitive to that.

"It's not a film about terrorism at all, but it does touch upon things like the Occupy movement and the anger in the streets and the anger people feel through disenfranchisement. But it's mostly a fun, 90mph ride that people can enjoy at the end of a long week!"

That's not to say though that there isn't still a hardened edge to the film, embodied mostly by the intimidating physical presence of Idris Elba. During the riotous scenes being filmed in Greenwich, *Buzz* watches from behind the monitors as Elba steps out of an unmarked van, pulls a balaclava down over his face and walks toward the chaos. And with that simple movement, he looks like he could easily take on everyone there.

Watkins agrees with that assessment. "The character of Briar is like a piece of granite; he's this stony-faced maverick and, because Idris has such phenomenal screen presence, I told him to do as little as possible and he just burns off the screen."

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Odd couple: CIA agent Sean Briar (Idris Elba) and pickpocket Michael Mason (Richard Madden, below) are an unlikely pairing.



‘I told Idris to do as little as possible and he just burns off the screen’
JAMES WATKINS

By comparison, Richard Madden is a Stark contrast (excuse the pun), matching up to Elba’s strong physicality with a colourful wit, something that Watkins was keen to encourage: “As Idris is a big man, I said to Richard, ‘You’ve got to be a little terrier snapping at him,’ and Richard just loved it. He was constantly throwing in little lines – even before the camera rolled – and Idris really worked very hard to maintain a stony face. It’s very funny.”

There are still large-scale set-pieces to consider though, including a vertigo-inducing rooftop chase, which must feel like a big step-change for a director who is primarily known for horror films told on a smaller canvas. For example, the current scene – which includes hundreds of angry protesters all shouting at the riot police poised in front of them – looks like it could easily get out of hand. A flare is lit, the shouts become more frenzied and there’s a sudden surge forward as punches are thrown everywhere. Then, through it all, Madden and Le Bon force their way to the front of the chaotic crowd, clearly on a mission of their own.

So how does Watkins stay in control? “I once talked [*about this*] to Gareth Edwards, who had just gone from *Monsters* to *Godzilla*, and he was very smart about it. He said, ‘When you’re working on a much bigger film, some things are so much easier because there’s so much more resource’. Where the challenges come are in trying to maintain the core values when there’s a lot of noise around.”

With a quick blast on the megaphone, that noise immediately dies down. The action suddenly stops, the flare is thrown down a side path and allowed to quietly diffuse, and everyone gets back in their positions. After another instruction, the crowd begin their shouts again, and with Watkins clearly enjoying himself at the helm, they’re not the only ones having a riot. **ML**

ETA | 22 APRIL *Bastille Day* opens next month.

Q&A RICHARD MADDEN

The *Thrones* star talks stunts, working with Idris Elba and training to be a pickpocket...



How did you prepare to play a thief?
I practised a lot because we tried to make it all as believable as possible. I said to James [*Watkins, director*] when we first met: “It can’t just be magic. Anything I steal in the movie, any sleight of hand things I do, I want to actually do it.”

Describe your character...
He’s a street rat, a lone wolf type, but he’s got a wit and a comedy and a fastness about him. The character you see 10 scenes deep into the film is a very different to when you first see him. And then, 30 scenes into the film, you’re seeing someone different again.

How did you cope with the action scenes?
I did a lot of training. For about six weeks I’d go to a big studio in Ealing, and every day there’d be platforms 15 feet high on different levels and I’d be chased on them. So I’d be jumping, running, swinging, diving under things, kicking down things, punching people...

How has it been working with Idris?
On the first few days on set, we were doing a scene in a car and I just started to fuck about, improvising between takes, and then I’m improvising during the takes and we started to have this really great rapport. We finished that and thought, “If the film’s like this, then we could have something really good on our hands”.

How does this differ from your previous roles?
It’s good to be out of period clothes. It’s really good to not be on a horse. It’s really great to just be playing a modern part. It’s much harder to improvise with period language. When it’s modern, we can play and we’re constantly working to try to make it really interesting. **ML**

PA







Bang on: *Hardcore Henry*'s stunt-heavy POV action features Sharlto Copley (above right).

FIRST WORD

A view to a kill

HARDCORE HENRY | Sharlto Copley stars in the first-person feature rewriting the action cinema rulebook.

"It truly is a jaw-dropping experience." Admittedly writer/director Ilya Naishuller may be a smidge biased when telling *Buzz* about his debut film.

But watch the trailer for *Hardcore Henry* – or indeed the first-person 'Bad Motherfucker' music video shot by Naishuller for his band Biting Elbows, and it's hard to imagine anyone emerging from the auditorium without a gaping orifice in their face.

Shot using a head-mounted GoPro rig, with two lenses located just beneath the nose of the operator (typically a stunt man), the film takes place entirely from the perspective of faceless protagonist Henry – a resurrected cyborg who mounts an insane rescue mission, with the help of Sharlto Copley's Jimmy, after his wife is abducted by a superpowered warlord. "The immersion was the number one thing," Naishuller explains. "Part of the reason why this film works really well is that you *are* the guy for 90 minutes."

After 'Bad Motherfucker' racked up over 120m views, Naishuller started writing a "more serious and slow burn spy movie" for Tim Roth (who cameos here), until a call from *Wanted* director Timur Bekmambetov encouraged Naishuller to expand his music video to feature length. "I was a little hesitant," Naishuller admits. "But he asked me a really important question: 'Wouldn't you want to see a good action POV film in a cinema?' I got cocky and thought, 'If anyone should do it, it should be me or James Cameron – and he's busy.'"

Describing the film as a "love letter to movies and games" the arduous shoot took more than a year and proved a huge learning experience for all involved. "Pretty much all the prep was useless because as soon as we got on set we'd realise that it looks like complete shit! So a lot was improvised. But every time something worked there was double the achievement of, 'That shot's great', but also, 'Fuck yeah – that's never been done.'" **JF**

ETA | 8 APRIL *Hardcore Henry* opens next month.

Q&A SHARLTO COPLEY

The former prawn talks first-person film-making.



What attracted you to the film?
The ability to just do something completely out there and crazy, that's really an unhinged, fun performance – a balls-to-the-wall, videogame-style caricature. I like watching those kind of characters and I like playing them.

Do you think more films could be made in the first person?
I do think it's possible to do a really serious narrative with POV now that we've done this. There's something quite fascinating about an actor revealing himself directly to the camera. It's quite engaging if it's done properly.

How much of the film is practical?
Pretty much everything you're seeing is real practical work. This was crazy in retrospect, the fact that nobody got seriously injured. I did more stunts than any western country would have let me do, I promise you that.

How did you feel when you first saw a finished cut?
I realised: this is something like a ride. It's just different from the average movie experience. Nowadays, I'm like, "Yeah, OK, I've seen that before." This is just like, "Holy shit! Do I bring a helmet? How insane is this going to be?" **JF**

REX

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Spies like us: Ewan McGregor and Stellan Skarsgård go dark.

FIRST LOOK!

London spies

OUR KIND OF TRAITOR | Ewan McGregor headlines the latest adaptation from spy fiction's most wanted man...

If the Beeb's *The Night Manager* stoked your appetite for more John le Carré adaptations, your wait is finally over.

Our Kind Of Traitor was groomed for adaptation in 2012, following Tomas Alfredson's stealth-hit *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. A little cast/director upheaval, a 2014 shoot and a year's gap later, its mysteries are ready for disclosure.

In a Bond-ian love-in, Ralph Fiennes (M), Mads Mikkelsen (Le Chiffre) and Ewan McGregor (007 rumour-mill perennial, so roll with it, OK?) were initially mooted for the adaptation of the 2010 novel, with Justin Kurzel (*Macbeth*) to direct what he dubbed a "more visceral" le Carré riff. Only McGregor remains from that lot, making this the season of delayed McGregor films (see also *Jane Got A Gun*, the full story of which is on p114). He's joined by Naomie Harris (Moneypenny) and Damian Lewis, whose rumour backlog is also haunted by 007's spectre (OK, enough Bond).

McGregor and Harris play Oxford academics Perry and Gail, a couple in Antigua charmed by Russian Dima (Stellan Skarsgård) over champagne. But this is le Carré, so after Dima tempts the Brits to a decadent party, it turns out he's the Russian mafia's "number one money-launderer" – and he wants Perry to leak info to MI6 so he can defect for his family's safety. Enter *Homeland*-er Lewis' MI6 man, at which point Perry tries to give up the info and finds himself sucked into a globe-trotting whirligig of trouble.

The script comes from adaptation-schooled scribe Hossein Amini, whose recent work includes a knotty riff on Patricia Highsmith's *The Two Faces Of January*. Susanna White took over the directing job, bringing her experience with Brit-TV adaps (*Bleak House*), American TV (*Generation Kill*) and starry ensembles (*Nanny McPhee 2*) to bare. Whether they'll shepherd the result to *Tinker*-sized business is uncertain: but either way, it's high time this one came in from the cold. **KH**

ETA | 13 MAY ***Our Kind Of Traitor*** **opens in the spring.**

Snapped up

Stars share photos from the front line. This month: **Valérian And The City Of A Thousand Planets.**

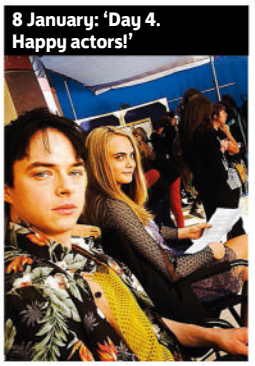


Luc Besson @lucbesson

It's almost 20 years since Luc Besson helmed *The Fifth Element*, and now the French filmmaker is getting back into the mad space opera game in a big, barmy way with *Valérian And The City Of A Thousand Planets*. Adapted from the French comic series *Valérian And Laureline*, first published in 1967, it stars Dane DeHaan, Cara Delevingne and a heck of a lot of visual effects... **JF**



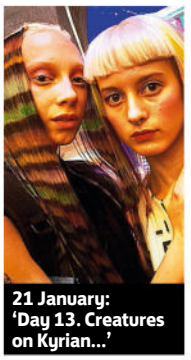
6 January: 'Day 2. Guardian of the Galaxy!'



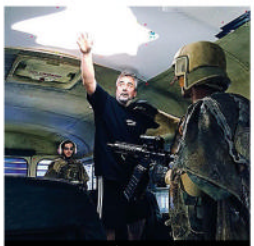
8 January: 'Day 4. Happy actors!'



20 January: 'Day 12. Welcome to planet Kyrian!'



21 January: 'Day 13. Creatures on Kyrian...'



30 January: 'Day 26. Something BIG fall from the roof...'



1 February: 'Day 28. Back on set with the Three Stooges!'

ETA | 21 JULY 2017 ***Valérian And The City Of A Thousand Planets*** **opens next year.**



Fine voice: the band make a statement that (right) Sir Patrick Stewart's neo-Nazi bar owner is not too pleased about.

EXCLUSIVE!

Band aid

GREEN ROOM | It's punks vs skins in the year's most terrifying thriller.

"I think it's why audiences respond to my films – they can see themselves," says writer-director Jeremy Saulnier. "My characters, they're not invincible action heroes. They're regular people." It certainly applies to Saulnier's latest. *Green Room*, his first since 2013's low-fi revenge thriller *Blue Ruin*, sees the callow members of a hardcore punk band cornered by a group of skinheads in a rural dive bar.

Called the Ain't Rights, the band (played by Anton Yelchin, *Arrested Development*'s Alia Shawkat, and British rising stars Callum Turner and Joe Cole) play a gig in front of a hostile neo-Nazi crowd before accidentally witnessing a murder – a moment of chance that leads to one almighty stand-off, with the bar's pragmatic/psychotic owner Darcy (Sir Patrick Stewart) prepared to eliminate any witnesses. What follows is one of the most intense screen experiences you'll see this year, as the Ain't Rights are forced to fight for their lives – something that wasn't lost on Shawkat. "We were all in very dark states," she reports. "It was like shooting two different films. The beginning part, all of us like a band, just hanging out, and then a very high-energy and emotional drama."

An ex-singer on the Washington D.C. hardcore punk scene, Saulnier used songs written by bands from his youth – albeit re-recorded by Portland-based band Toxic Holocaust – to give the film its underground edge. But he had help from a willing cast. "Callum became obsessed with Johnny Rotten," says Saulnier. "He would dress up in this coat and walk around London, trying to get into this character."

If this lends *Green Room* its authenticity, it's Patrick Stewart (and some gut-churning prosthetics) that give the movie its ferocity. The *X-Men* star roars across the screen as Darcy. "For him, he was looking for an adventure and we certainly gave that to him," says Saulnier. "When he finally saw the movie, he felt he'd taken a chance and it had paid off." Get ready to get punk'd. **JM**

ETA | 13 MAY *Green Room* opens later this Spring.

Q A ANTON YELCHIN



How tough was it to make *Green Room*?
The whole movie was pretty rough. We're freaking out for most of it. But there was this one couple of hours where Joe Cole just farted 36 times. We'd spent so much time in a room watching each other die, to see Joe fart was the best thing ever.

What was it like watching Patrick Stewart turn into a monster?
Patrick is hardcore, man. He'd be marching round set, alone – it was weird! Couldn't get him to stop, man! On set, we didn't talk. But afterwards, on the van rides home or at lunch, he was really nice.

The film really escalates in terror. Did you buy into that increasing hysteria?
Oh sure. Like, why do these kids make a lot of decisions that they do? Because they're fucking 20-something and they're stuck in a room and told they're going to get murdered! They make weird choices.

You're back for *Star Trek Beyond*. What did you think of Simon Pegg co-writing the script?
I thought it was great. Simon is a wonderful writer – very funny, very smart. Even if Simon wasn't in it, that would be a great choice. **JM**

PA IMAGES

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RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

What's stopping, what's starting in movieland...



San Andreas was Warner Bros' biggest hit of 2015, so naturally a sequel is in the works. This time the Dwayne Johnson vehicle will focus on eruptions occuring around the Ring of Fire. Shouldn't have gone for that vindaloo...

After years in development hell the big-screen adaptation of Stephen King's *The Stand* has once again stumbled, with director Josh Boone opting to adapt another King novel, *Revival*, first.

Shooting is underway on Jason Flemyng's directorial debut, vampire thriller *Eat Local*. Charlie Cox will star in the film about an Essex boy caught between a coven of hungry vampires and armed vampire hunters.



Six years since the "final" chapter, the *Saw* series is getting another installment – *Saw: Legacy*. Place your bets whether it'll be a sequel, prequel, remake or reboot...

Don't get your hopes up for a Falcon solo movie if Anthony Mackie's latest statements are anything to go by. The justification? "That means my dudes are not going to be there." **JF**

PA

My movie life

The films that have inspired, terrified, amused and thoroughly upset Michael Collins director **Neil Jordan**





THE FIRST MOVIE I EVER SAW

A Warner Bros movie about giant ants. I must have seen that at a Fairview cinema on the north side of Dublin. It was called **THEM!** These giant ants would climb over dunes and Santa Monica beaches. I was probably about five or six. It was terrifying. I remember the sound of the ants [*does whirring noise*]. The first movie I went back to when making *Michael Collins* was *The Battle Of Algiers* – if anybody makes a political movie about social appeal, they watch that film, don't they?



THE FILM THAT ALWAYS MAKES ME CRY

BABE. I've probably seen it about eight times and it's made me cry every time. Tell George Miller that, will you? It's his best film. Every time he feeds the pig and sings that song: "If I could make a day for you..." I never saw the sequel [Babe: Pig In The City]. People say it's great, but I didn't want to destroy my memories of the first *Babe*. The most emotional film *I've* ever made is *The Butcher Boy*. It relates most to me and my childhood.



MY DESERT ISLAND MOVIE

You mean a movie I'd take and watch again and again and again? Maybe **LA STRADA** – you know, that Fellini movie? Seeing that, it was the first time that I ever thought movies could be amazing. I was used to seeing films that were westerns or war movies. I just thought there were genres. They were almost like reading a comic strip. When I saw that movie, I was like, "Whoa, I didn't know you could do this kind of thing." It was the first Fellini I'd seen. It's lovely.



THE FILM I LOVE THAT NOBODY'S HEARD OF

THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT. I love that movie. I got the narrative structure for *The Company Of Wolves* from *The Saragossa Manuscript*. You know, someone walking around and finding a book, and within that book is the story you go into, and within that story is another story... That extraordinary hall of mirrors effect. It's a very long film. I first saw it in the '70s. It's one of those movies that, again, you go, "Whoa, OK, I didn't know you could do that."



THE FILM THAT SCARES ME THE MOST

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN. I saw that when I was a kid and it terrified me like nothing else. They're reviving the monsters, aren't they? Hell, tell them I'm available! *The Invisible Man* is a difficult one, isn't it? I'm a fan of the James Whale one. My movie, *Michael Collins*, is scary in that it's about the practice of violence, the awfulness of it, and the impossibility to stop it once you've started. I watched a ton of gangster movies before I made it.



THE LAST FILM I SAW ON A PLANE

I can't even think of the last film I saw on a plane. I do remember seeing that Tom Hanks movie, **BIG**. Tom Hanks was doing that bit where he grabs the tennis ball and doesn't give it back. The producer next to me said, "Just look around." I turned around and the entire plane was laughing. I do like to watch a movie on a plane. Anything to take my mind off that I'm 30,000ft above the ground... **JG**

ETA | OUT NOW ***Michael Collins 20th Anniversary Edition*** **is out on DVD and BD.**







Desert drive: Garrett Hedlund gets behind the wheel, (above right) Oscar Isaac gets serious and (right) Walton Goggins delivers some advice.

EXCLUSIVE!

Desert storm

MOJAVE | Garrett Hedlund and Oscar Isaac get sand in their shoes...

"I love the desert," says William Monahan, whose new film *Mojave* takes us slap-bang into one of America's most famous arid terrains.

In reality, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of *The Departed* and *Kingdom Of Heaven* hails from the slightly more leafy New England. "There is something about the desert that attracts a young man from this culture far more than it attracts the young men boiling out [*in*] various deserts now."

After directing 2010's reclusive actress tale *London Boulevard*, Monahan's sophomore behind-camera effort is a pared-back indie, made with "a lot less cooks in the kitchen", as his star Garrett Hedlund puts it. The story sees Hedlund's artist/actor Tom encounter Oscar Issac's psychotic Jack in the aforementioned desert, as a cozy campfire chat escalates into a deadly game of cat-and-mouse.

Going low-budget, Monahan called in favours – not least an appearance by Mark Wahlberg, who'd featured in *The Departed* and last year's Monahan-scripted *The Gambler*. Alongside *The Hateful Eight*'s Walton Goggins, who plays Tom's agent, Wahlberg is an equally odious Hollywood player rarely seen without two bimbos by his side.

So is this based on Monahan's experience of Tinseltown folk? "Absolutely not. I'm pretty well known for not being that kind of writer. I don't import civilians. I write my own people," he says. "If Mark Wahlberg is screaming off a balcony that he doesn't need Hollywood bullshit because he owns half a clamshack in Harwichport, Massachusetts, you can be sure I didn't find him on the street. He came from my brain!"

Right now, Monahan is not sure whether he'll return to direct, feeling constrained by the compromises often forced upon directors. "Frankly I never expected to be living in a universe of mixed reviews for decisions I did not make. That's no way to work and live... In films, there is an actual paper you sign, where you become something other than the author. I don't think I'll be signing that paper anymore." **JM**

ETA | 25 MARCH ***Mojave*** **opens later this month.**

Q&A GARRETT HEDLUND

The American star on monologues, the Mojave and Marky Mark.



What was it like to go head-to-head with Oscar Isaac?
I was jealous! My character was written quite silent and ambiguous. And Oscar plays a character that's on the flip side of that. He has some wonderfully long monologues and I sit there!

How would you describe the shoot?
It was much more guerrilla. Before we even started, Bill and I took a five-man crew out to the Mojave – and we did some bonus footage. They strapped the camera to the jeep and they let me go whipping around in the desert.

Had you been to the Mojave before?
In LA, the Mojave is an hour-and-a-half drive. I have friends that come up from Brazil, London or Australia and all they want to do is head out to Joshua Tree and go camp and just get out of the circus and chaos, and I relate to that. I've definitely taken off at 2 o'clock on random Tuesdays and found myself 12 hours away.

You worked with Mark Wahlberg before on *Four Brothers*. What was it like to reunite?
It was fun. He and Bill go way back, with *The Gambler* and *The Departed*. So when Wahlberg was on set, he's like, "I'm the Monahan man! I'm not doing it if it's not Monahan!" **JM**

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It Shouldn't Happen To A Film Journalist



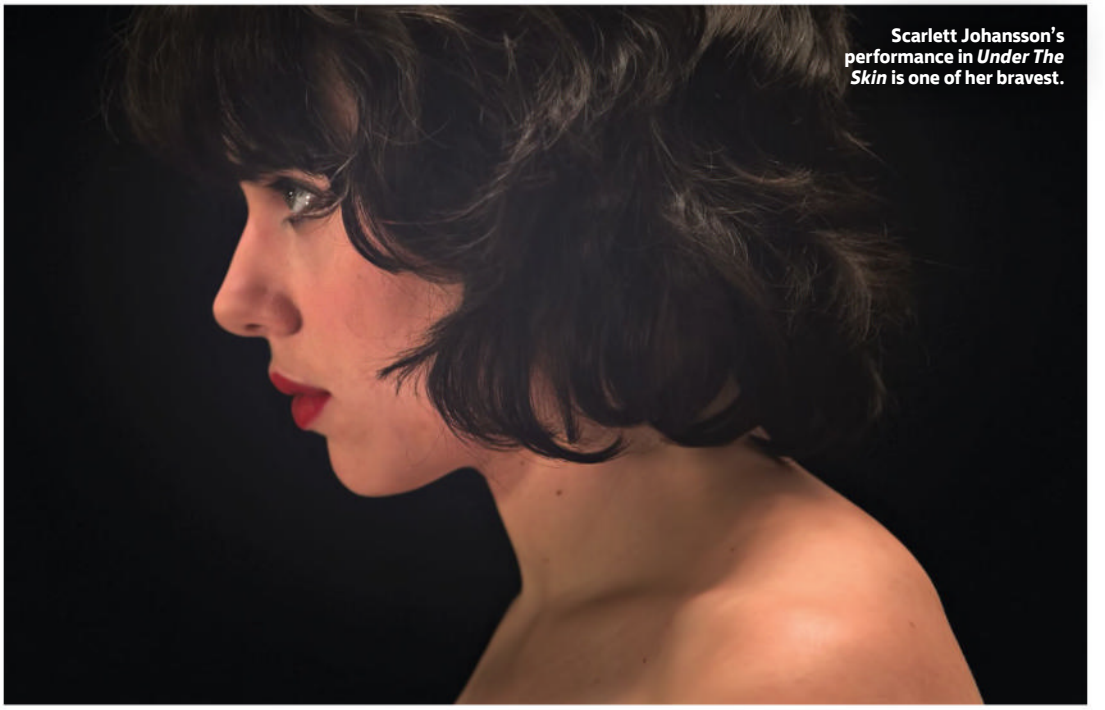
Editor-at-Large Jamie Graham lifts the lid on movie journalism. This month: **critic-speak.**

In the last couple of days I've attended press screenings of both the Coen brothers' *Hail, Caesar!* and Jeff Nichols' *Midnight Special*. Both are worth seeing, and both possess their fair share of head-scratch moments.

Chatting to fellow journalists after, I endeavoured to keep a straight face as the carefully worded critiques began. "It's a film that needs time to settle," mused one critic of *Midnight Special* when asked what it all added up to. "I need to sleep on it." Meaning, of course, she didn't have the faintest. "I loved how the pool of writers [*in* Hail, Caesar!] talked of slipping subtexts into films... Which is just what the Coens were doing," offered a respected reviewer with a smack of self-satisfaction, and then made a run for his train when asked just what those subtexts meant or, indeed, were.

We all do it. Whether out of a want to look smart (or at least not look stupid) or simply because film journalism, like any other profession, comes with its own lexicon, we all utilise off-the-peg phrases to dress up what it is that we're saying, or to camouflage the terrible truth that we have nothing to say at all.

If an actor mumbles through a movie, it is an "understated performance." If they shout a lot and generally grandstand (but are an acknowledged master – Daniel Day-Lewis, say), they are "larger than life." An A-lister showing some skin gives a "brave performance", and if they dare to go full-frontal, then they are "exposing themselves both physically and emotionally" in what is, of course, "their bravest performance yet".



Scarlett Johansson's performance in *Under The Skin* is one of her bravest.

'Showing some skin is a "brave performance"'

Such phrases might be less conspicuous than blaring '90s favourites like describing a movie as a "rollercoaster ride" or "like [*insert film title here*] on acid" or "so-and-so-meets-such-and-such", but they are every bit as clichéd. And they are, in fact, arguably more offensive, because they keep to the shadows and hide true meanings. They are treacherous. They disguise themselves as friends when all they want to do is lie and cheat. So when you next read a review of a movie that is described as "patiently paced" and "labyrinthine" or "opaque" – terms that are often applied in a positive context – at least consider the possibility that the person writing said review actually found the film really, really tedious and couldn't follow a damn thing that was going on.

That said, I have to admit that there are times when critic-speak (read: bullshit) attains levels of true artistry. I'll never forget the time, early in my career, when I emerged from private screening room Mr Young's (now called The Soho Screening Rooms) after sitting next to an esteemed broadsheet critic during Bertolucci's *Stealing Beauty*. Aware that he'd drifted in and out of consciousness, snoring like a wounded warthog, for much of the film, I nonetheless requested his thoughts. I asked out of politeness, out of a desire to meet this, well, larger-than-life personality who I'd read and admired for years, and, yes, out of mischief, for I knew he'd have no choice but to 'fess up. Think again. A true master of critic-speak, he turned to me without pause and with cast-iron confidence, looking me straight in the eye as he spat out a one-word summation: "Patchy."

Jamie will return next issue...
For more misadventures follow: @jamie_graham9 on Twitter.

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From director Zack Snyder (*Man Of Steel*) comes ***Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice***, starring Oscar winner Ben Affleck (*Argo*) as Batman/Bruce Wayne and Henry Cavill (*Man Of Steel*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*) as Superman/Clark Kent in the characters' first big-screen pairing. Fearing the actions of a god-like superhero left unchecked, Gotham City's own formidable, forceful vigilante takes on Metropolis's most revered modern-day saviour while the world wrestles with what sort of hero it really needs. And with Batman and Superman at war with one another, a new threat quickly arises, putting mankind in greater danger than it's ever known before.



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agenda



Travis Fimmel is ready for war.

"I'm a farm boy so I like the simple way of life," *Warcraft: The Beginning* star Travis Fimmel told *The Big Issue*. "I'm not a big fan of all the technology..." Rampant technophobia may explain why Fimmel is the perfect fit for Anduin Lothar, knight champion of Azeroth's humans, who favour practical armour and weaponry over the polka-dot pyjamas of Fimmel's orcish castmates. "It was such a great experience, and a new one for me. I saw broomsticks with foam on the end."

The Aussie actor may be a born and raised farm boy, but Fimmel was quick to conquer the modelling world after moving to LA in the early 2000s, becoming the first male to secure a six-figure deal from Calvin Klein. Since leaving modelling behind for acting Fimmel starred alongside Patrick Swayze in crime series *The Beast*, and currently fronts historical drama *Vikings* as Norse hero Ragnar Lothbrok.

Later this year he'll appear in indie drama *Maggie's Plan*, but first there's the small matter of Duncan Jones' mega budget tech-stravaganza. If you think Fimmel's end game is fortune and glory, however, think again. "I wish I was on the farm the whole time but there's no money in it, mate. I'm doing this to make some money so I can get my own place up in the hills somewhere." **JF**

ETA | 3 JUNE *Warcraft: The Beginning* opens this summer.

The One To Watch

PETER HAPAK / TRUNK ARCHIVE

The need-to-know...

STAR WARS: EPISODE VIII

Hot on the heels of *The Force Awakens* grossing $2 billion worldwide, filming is now officially underway on Rian Johnson's 2017 sequel at Pinewood Studios. The news was announced in a playful behind the scenes video featuring footage from Skellig Michael, the real Irish island that doubles as Luke Skywalker's self-imposed hideaway. Johnson's film will "continue [*Rey's*] epic journey with Finn, Poe and Luke Skywalker" and has added Benicio del Toro, Laura Dern and relative newcomer Kelly Marie Tran to the cast. The only major characters not confirmed to return? Peter Mayhew's walking carpet and, well, you-know-who...





THE INVISIBLE MAN

Universal is thinking big for its nascent Monster universe. And we're not talking about Frankenstein. Having already tapped Tom Cruise to star in *The Mummy*, Johnny Depp has signed on to play the titular transparent scientist in the latest adaptation of H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*. *Men In Black* and *Now You See Me*'s Ed Solomon will write the script under the supervision of universe shepherds Alex Kurtzman and Chris Morgan, though there's currently no director attached. Presuming Luke Evans returns as Drac, that just leaves Frankie and his Bride, the Wolfman and Van Helsing to be cast for the inevitable team-up movie.

ALIEN: COVENANT

As well as confirming that Noomi Rapace won't be returning as Dr Elizabeth Shaw, pseudo-*Prometheus* sequel *Alien: Covenant* has added an unlikely cast member to its ranks – *Your Highness* star Danny McBride. *Spacebound And Down*, anyone?



KATHRYN BIGELOW



Zero Dark Thirty director Kathryn Bigelow has settled on her next project – an untitled crime drama based on the 1967 12th Street Riot. She'll reunite with regular screenwriter Mark Boal on the film, which will explore systemic racism in urban Detroit.

FAST 8

The Diesel-powered *Fast* franchise is about to get a lot more Furiosa, with word that *Fury Road*'s hit and run film-stealer Charlize Theron is in talks to take on main villain duties in *Fast 8*. Theron's big bad would debut in the F. Gary Gray-directed 2017 sequel, and is expected to reprise the role for the final two films in the series in 2019 and 2021.



JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT



Few actors can swing their hips as well as Channing Tatum and Joseph Gordon-Levitt, so it's welcome news that the pair may buddy up for an as-yet untitled movie musical. The film is the brainchild of Gordon-Levitt and *Scott Pilgrim* scribe Michael Bacall with the toe-tapping pair set to play pilots who get into R-rated misadventures.

The scale

ON FIRE



Deadpool
Ryan Reynolds' merc movie has shattered box office records by earning $132.7 million in its stateside debut – the seventh biggest superhero opening, and the biggest R-rated weekend ever.



ID:4 Live
Forget Dolby Atmos: *Jurassic Park*, *Aliens* and *Independence Day* will all screen at the Royal Albert Hall this year with live music by the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra.



Miles Teller
The *Whiplash* star is set for Amy Schumer's PTSD drama *Thank You For Your Service* and buzzy boxing movie *Bleed For This* in 2016, but long-shelved comedy *Get A Job* has alarm bells ringing.



Transformers
We hope you like/can tolerate *Transformers*' continuing existence, because there'll be a new one every year between 2016 and 2018, including a Bumblebee-centric spinoff.



Zoolander 2
In the face of mediocre reviews and the surprise might of *Deadpool*, *Zoolander 2* has spectacularly tumbled off the catwalk, earning a disastrous $18 million in its opening weekend.

COOLING OFF

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MAARTEN DE BOER / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

The Talent

‘My parents want me to do comedy – they’re sick of crying’

Odessa Young is taking her first steps...

“A revelation” was how programmers at the London Film Festival described Odessa Young’s turn in *The Daughter* last autumn. That’s putting it mildly, with the 17-year-old Sydney native outshining veteran co-stars like Miranda Otto, Sam Neill and Geoffrey Rush. Modesty prevails, though. “It’s really interesting to think what I’m going to be,” she says, “or if I’m going to burn out in a year or two!”

How did it feel to play Hedvig, *The Daughter*’s title character?
With our director, Simon Stone, I was in safe hands. I felt very safe. On the other hand, I had no idea what I was doing! Sometimes if I let myself think I knew what I was doing, I felt like I did.

It has a great cast. Who were you most nervous to work with?
Definitely Geoffrey Rush! He’s very imposing, isn’t he? He’s Captain Barbossa in *Pirates Of The Caribbean*! You don’t want to get anywhere near that. He was lovely, though.

You’re also coming up in *Looking For Grace* with Radha Mitchell...
Yeah... I made *The Daughter* the day after I finished *Looking For Grace*. Literally. I was on the redeye flight from Perth back to Sydney to be on set the next day. They’re both my first films!

What are your ambitions?
I’d love to do comedy. I’m not sure if I’d be good at it. My timing is not great. I’m not a very funny person, I don’t feel. My parents keep asking me to do comedy because they’re sick of going to screenings of films they’re going to cry in. **JM**

ETA | MAY *The Daughter* opens later this spring.



Low point: Matthias Schoenaerts plays PTSD-afflicted Vincent.

The Spotlight

War games

DISORDER | Alice Winocour's complex PTSD drama takes you to the edge...

"I think paranoids are always right!" remarks Alice Winocour, writer-director of *Disorder*. The French thriller stars Matthias Schoenaerts, the Belgian who broke out as bruisers in *Bullhead*, *Rust & Bone* and *The Drop*, as Vincent, an ex-Special Forces solider assigned to look after the trophy wife (Diane Kruger) of a Lebanese businessman on their luxury estate – named Maryland.

Trouble is, Vincent's post-traumatic stress disorder has left him with a history of destabilising paranoia. "I wanted to write a part for a solider," says Winocour, 40. "I know in American cinema, there are so many films about soldiers. But in France, we don't really respect soldiers. They're fighting for our country, but we don't have that patriotic thing. I know when I've met soldiers, I felt really sad about this – they don't have that respect."

Naturally, she met a number of real-life soldiers from Special Forces to try and understand what makes them tick. "They are trained mentally – they have mind-sets to go beyond their limits," she says. "They are always close to death. So when they are back in the real world, then they feel really confused. They told me, they can't look at children in the same way as before because they've seen children killing people with stones."

> ***'Soldiers are trained to go beyond limits'***

Inspired by the work of British photojournalist Don McCullin, even when he gave up shooting in conflict zones ("what struck me was that those landscapes were all haunted by death"), Winocour wanted Vincent to physically reflect his time in battle. Covered in scars and tattoos, the outside had to mirror the underneath. "We thought it was a character that has to wear his history on his body."

Her interest in PTSD aside, Winocour admits part of the reason to make *Disorder* was to show that "there are no boundaries" for female directors now. "They can direct any kind of film," she says. "I hope my film won't be seen only as a thriller directed by a woman. I wanted to film Matthias as an object of desire, as men do when they film women. But I hope I have filmed him with his complexity as a real character." **JM**

ETA | 25 MARCH ***Disorder*** **opens this month.**

Matthias Schoenaerts



The Belgian star on stress, stardom and the sounds of war.

Tell us about Vincent. How did you get involved with *Disorder*?
I got a text from [Rust & Bone *director*] Jacques Audiard saying, "There is a friend of mine, who I truly consider to be one of the greatest talents in France, and she wrote a part for you. I think you should read it."

Did you meet real soldiers suffering from PTSD?
I did. It's pretty disturbing. One of the guys was an elite soldier and he was 30 years old. He's still a kid, to some extent, and he'd been at war for eight years. That person was functioning perfectly within that environment. It's only when he came back that he started to discover very slowly that his system was out of balance – emotionally, morally, physically. He was a total wreck.

How else did you prepare?
On my iPod, I was listening to war sounds. Like battlefield sounds. You should try it. Seriously, if you listen to it for 30 minutes, people shooting and bombing, it drives you nuts.

Your career is exploding. Are you ready for stardom?
I don't really know what stardom is. If stardom implies you're not able to walk the streets without being harassed, then that's not something I'm looking forward to. **JM**

PA IMAGES

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High times: Scheherazade (Crista Alfaiate) and the Grand Vizier (Américo Silva) share a moment and (below) the judge (Luísa Cruz) holds court.





Tall Tales

ARABIAN NIGHTS | The multi-movie epic from Portuguese director Miguel Gomes is the year's maddest proposition.

"Y'know, I have to be honest," admits Miguel Gomes. "I didn't finish the book. It's pretty long..." It's an odd thing to hear from the man who's spent the last year being lauded at festivals around the world for what might be the most ambitious film ever made – a three part, six-hour epic that reinterprets Scheherazade's *One Thousand And One Nights* into a sprawling modern fable about the Portuguese recession.

Clocking in at a bum-numbing 338 minutes, it might sound like the sort of ticket that should come with coffee and flight socks, but *Arabian Nights* is a long way from being boring.

"It's punk rock," says Gomes. "We felt like a garage band when we were making it. We were just reacting to the things around us, trying to respond to whatever was happening in my country. But it came from this feeling, or this urge, that it wouldn't be enough to base it solely in reality."

'It's a punk rock film. We were just reacting to the things around us'

Cue a dizzy half-day collage of short stories – some sad, some funny, most downright absurd. Spanning three thematic chapters (released separately for the faint-hearted – in weekly installments – as *The Restless One*, *The Desolate One* and *The Enchanted One*), the film barrages us with exploding whales, beached mermaids, ghost cows, evil erections, magical dogs, death metal, wizards, genies and Gomes himself – popping up to tell us how difficult the film is to make before introducing a two hour faux-doc about chaffinches. It's mad, monolithic stuff – and no one had any idea where it would end up when they started filming it.

"There was no structure," laughs the Portuguese auteur, best known for his lyrical 2012 prize-winner, *Tabu*. "All I knew was that I was going to try and tell as many stories as I could in a year. Within that time we had a team of journalists investigating different things going on in Portugal, and we transformed that information into our tales. It was like creating the pieces of the puzzle without knowing what the whole picture looked like."

Describing the process as "a utopia", the film is as much a comment on filmmaking itself as it is on the state of the nation. "It's about the problem of telling a story," considers Gomes. "There is no one exclusive way of looking at anything. There's no one way of telling a story, no one way of making a film and no one way of talking about Portugal."

Culled from 12 months of continuous shooting, the final running time seems frankly conservative for a film with so much to say – with reels of extra footage (and extra stories) that didn't make the edit. Does that mean a director's cut on the DVD is in the works? Gomes goes quiet. "To be honest, I think the film is big enough already..." **PB**

ETA | 22 APRIL ***Arabian Nights*** **begins next month.**

Ruth Negga is setting a course for Hollywood.

"We're all born with the same sense of joy and wonder, it's only outside influences that make us fearful and scared and a bit damaged," says Ruth Negga, the Ethiopian-Irish actress embracing her vulnerability for indie drama *Iona*. Negga is no stranger to the big screen, but with roles in *Warcraft: The Beginning*, the TV adap of *Preacher* and Jeff Nichols' *Loving*, 2016 looks to be a breakout year...

What is *Iona* about?
Iona is about a mother and her son who return to the island of her youth by way of a traumatic event. It's an isolated island with a religious community she was brought up amongst and it's about her relationship with the people that she left behind.

Was it daunting stepping into the world of *Warcraft*?
Yeah, always. But you can't let that paralyse you. Duncan [*Jones*] is such a down-to-earth, kind guy that I never felt intimidated. I saw a cut of it a couple of months ago, and it's awesome. I love those kind of films.

Have you started shooting *Preacher*?
I'm on the *Preacher* set at the moment, and it's so much fun. Well, it's quite a dizzying experience, really. It feels like [*Tulip*] has no boundaries and therefore, as an actor, I have a lot of freedom to do anything, which is very exciting but it can be quite daunting.

Was the opportunity to work with Jeff Nichols a big appeal on *Loving*?
Oh, definitely. *Mud* and *Take Shelter* are two of the most intelligent pieces of filmmaking I've seen. This story was so important to him and to everybody. They didn't want to make it into a saccharine Disney love story, it needed to be told as truthfully and faithfully as possible. **JF**

ETA | 25 MARCH *Iona* opens this month.

The Talent

'Duncan Jones is so kind and down-to-earth'

CAMERA PRESS / JAY BROOKS

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Dark times: Saul Ausländer (Géza Röhrig) and Abraham Warszawski (Levente Molnár) go head to head.

The business of killing

The Spotlight

SON OF SAUL | Director László Nemes on his harrowing Holocaust drama.

Citizen Kane. *The Maltese Falcon*. *The 400 Blows*. *Eraserhead*. *Reservoir Dogs*. Any serious discussion of the greatest film debuts of all time must now include Hungarian Holocaust drama *Son Of Saul*. By the time you read this, director László Nemes will surely have added the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar to his roster of awards since his film premiered in the main competition at Cannes – unheard of for a debut.

"I wanted to go back to the here and now of the extermination, with a point of view from within, to give a sense of what the human being had to endure in such circumstances," explains Nemes, staring at the pencil he's worrying between his fingers and stealing the odd upwards glance. "Films usually have an intellectual approach to the Holocaust instead of a visceral approach. They are not the point of view of the victims; they are the point of view of those who are perpetrating, or they jump point of views, or present a god-like point of view. This is problematic because it tries to encompass and describe. You cannot, as a human, understand."

Nemes' answer is to follow one man, Saul Ausländer (Géza Röhrig), as he goes about his daily chores at Auschwitz-Birkenau in October of 1944. A Hungarian member of the Sonderkommando, the Jewish prisoners who were forced to aid the Nazis in the mechanics of extermination before themselves being executed and replaced every few months, he's part of the business of genocide: unloading trains, loading gas chambers, burning bodies, shovelling ash. And while a story hook is introduced when

'I wanted to have a sense of everyday life, even in hell'

Saul thinks he spies the corpse of his son in a crematorium and determines to bury the body, the film refuses to deal in anything so tawdry as suspense or thrills or heroics.

"This is a factory," Nemes states. "Even if it's a factory of death, it's built by man. So I wanted to have this sense of everyday life, even in hell." With the camera never leaving Saul's granite face and DOP Mátyás Erdély employing shallow focus within a square 1:37:1 frame, viewers are afforded only glimpses of the horrors. A sickening sense of disorientation is amplified by long, reeling takes and cacophonous sound design: barking dogs, shouted commands, roaring fires.



"If you shoot too much and tell too much you only reduce the scope of it," says Nemes, who trained as assistant director to the great Hungarian director Béla Tarr. "If you use imagination as an intermediary, then through suggestion you can create an intuition of the enormity, of the boundless suffering."

The extraordinary result is harrowing in the extreme – which is exactly as it should be. **JG**

ETA | 29 APRIL ***Son Of Saul*** **opens next month.**

The Spotlight

Jobs worth

Desperate measures: Thierry Taugourdeau (Vincent Lindon) is just trying to make ends meet.

THE MEASURE OF A MAN | Vincent Lindon conquers Cannes and more...

When the Coen Brothers-led jury chose Vincent Lindon last year as Best Actor of the Cannes Film Festival, it was something of a shock. The film, Stéphane Brizé's *The Measure Of A Man*, was hardly the most talked-about on the Croisette – and with the likes of Tim Roth (*Chronic*), Michael Fassbender (*Macbeth*) and Colin Farrell (*The Lobster*) the hot favourites, the 56-year-old Lindon was something of a rank outsider.

Yet watch *The Measure Of A Man* and it's not hard to see why the lugubrious Lindon was chosen. He plays Thierry, an unemployed father in his fifties who ends up snagging a soul-sapping job as a security guard in a supermarket. "I like movies that witness a way of life," admits Lindon, when *Agenda* meets him in Paris. "Frank Capra, Raoul Walsh, Ken Loach – all the big movies say more than the story of the script."

Certainly, the film recalls Loach's earlier movies, like *Riff-Raff* and *Raining Stones*, dealing with harsh blue-collar economic realities and social inequality. Lindon, now on his third movie with Brizé, was impressed by the way the film allows the audience space to make up their minds rather than dictating feelings. "If a movie says, 'That's what you have to think', it makes me very angry. I hate that. Let me think what I want to think. Just show me the facts."

Lindon admits it wasn't easy to inhabit this most downtrodden of men. "I kept saying to myself, 'If I were Thierry, what would I do?'" he says. Working with a series of non-actors, however, helped emphasise the grim reality of the situation. "We all portrayed our parts as real people. That's why I wanted to do the film above all." Never one to overcomplicate, "I'm very simple," he adds. "If I like the character I want to be him."

> ***'If a movie tells you what to think, it makes me very angry'***

With a career stretching back 30 years in France – highlights range from *Betty Blue* to Claire Denis' *Bastards* – Lindon now seems in a real sweet spot. Grabbing the lead in the upcoming *The White Knights*, based on a real-life scandal involving humanitarian workers, and winning in Cannes, it's been a brilliant year, non? "In the cinema life it was a good year," he nods. "In my private life, I had the same year as all the French people."

Like any of his countrymen, the terror attacks that rocked Paris last year left him feeling shocked and saddened. "So it's very difficult to say today that 2015 was a good year," he sighs. "It's quite impolite. The prize in Cannes and what happened in Cannes I am obliged to separate [*from everything else*]. I can't say to somebody it was a good year, it's impossible." **JM**



ETA | 8 APRIL *The Measure Of A Man* opens next month.

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Mazy days

The Jim Henson Company is planning a return trip to the Goblin Kingdom with a new version of *Labyrinth*. *Guardians Of The Galaxy*'s Nicole Perlman is scripting the film, which could be a sequel, prequel or an entirely new tale. But there's one thing it definitely *isn't*, says Perlman: "No one is remaking *Labyrinth*. That movie is perfect as it is." With David Bowie's death stirring fond memories of magic dances and codpieces, this babe will need real power to match the original... **JF**

ETA|TBC *Labyrinth* is currently in pre-production.

Plain talking

Learn the movie lingo

This month:

Alan Smithee

This mysterious fellow has dozens of directing credits to his name. The twist? He doesn't exist. Smithee was the official Director's Guild of America pseudonym for film-makers who wanted their name taken off a project between 1968 and 2000. The name was retired following the controversy surrounding *An Alan Smithee Film: Burn Hollywood Burn*.

ILLUSTRATION: GLEN BROGAN; PICTURE CREDIT: PA



Career injection

THE WACHOWSKIS | Can a career reboot save the sci-fi siblings from another spectacular crash?

When *Jupiter Ascending* was in prep, Lana and Andy Wachowski played the tease with planned set-pieces. Phrases like "the new bullet-time" circulated as a chopper-hanging rig was devised for an anti-gravity chase through Chicago. The sky-boots pursuit itself brought a rush of levity to a stodgy film: but the words '*Starlight Express*' did ping to mind.

In short, gravity won. Despite their FX pizzazz and laudable commitment to original filmmaking, the Wachowskis have become near-synonymous with the mismatch between extravagant ambition and flawed narrative execution. The filmmakers who belly-flopped to Earth, perhaps? That's a bit harsh, but *Jupiter Ascending* did flop.

The warning signs were there, of course. *The Matrix* was *the* bar-raising '90s actioner, but the sequels squandered grand conceptual free-think on joint-stiffened highway fights and space-cave raves. Despite its FX strengths, *Speed Racer* stiffed harder still. A potential treat emerged duller than *Cars 2*: a sugar-rush CG high let down by axle-grinding storytelling.

Even recent career upswings have lurched erratically. A pleasingly over-ambitious team-up with Tom Tykwer to adapt David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* drew mixed responses: bewitched ("Wow, existential brain-shag!"), bewildered ("Bored now..."), bemused ("Why is Tom Hanks wearing that stupid conk?"). Last year, Netflix series *Sense8* spread out a trippy mind-meld mystery over 12 episodes, but all it led to was a mess-mash of so-so action, sexual fantasy and sappy romance.

As for *Jupiter*, the failure of that grand folly has seen die-hard fans lamenting the shift towards a franchise-dominated landscape, away from original visions. Lana has agreed, arguing that post-9/11 audiences rely on easy certainties in uncertain times. What chance does the Wachowskis' self-proclaimed "unique and complex" mindset have, the claim goes, in timid times?

The argument almost convinces... Until it doesn't. While the Wachowskis' romantic individualism is welcome in theory, *Jupiter* hardly bursts with complex originality. For wit and style, the best MCU entries thrash it; for big and bold, *Gravity* and *Interstellar* whup it. True, it's hard to see studios splashing millions on a Wachowski film now. But maybe that will work in everyone's favour. *The Matrix* aside, the Wachowskis' noir-ish debut *Bound* is their most focused film. Something of its no-budget kind might reboot our faith. Then let's talk sky-boots. **KH**

FIVE POINT FIX...

1. Do another *Bound*-sized movie. Call it *Re-Bound*, whatever. Either way: go small, sharp and stylish.
2. Refresh their genre reach. How about lean, keen horror and a revisit to early script *Carnivore*?
3. Or flex their directing skills on someone else's script. Writing isn't always their strong suit.
4. Lana dislikes superhero movies but she co-scripted *Plastic Man*. A mid-budget spandex romp might liven them up.
5. Lana loves Stockholm art-helmer Roy Andersson. An experimental indie team-up might fry everyone's noggins.



The Hero

Richard Dreyfuss

On Lucas, Spielberg and the horror of Piranha 3D...

The star of *Jaws* and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, Richard Dreyfuss, 69, won the Best Actor Oscar for *The Goodbye Girl* and is now in the 52nd year of his memorable career. One of his best turns, as the Player King in *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, can now be seen in a 25th anniversary edition.

In life, are you more like the flamboyant Player King or the 'everyman' characters you're best known for?
The Player King, of course – in my daily life, I try to use medieval bathrooms [*laughs*]. I'm an actor, and an actor is many, many, many things. But I never had a better gift handed to me than the Player King.

You've now been acting for more than 50 years. Do you still get the same juice out of it?
I can't say that I do. I enjoy it as much as ever, but I don't feel I'll die if I don't do it. Hollywood demands that you must keep winning. I remember turning to a friend of mine around the year 2000 and saying, "How often do we have to win in order to *win*?"

You were winning repeatedly in the 1970s. Did you feel invincible?
I felt like I'd won a race that I'd put myself in when I was nine. And I did that two or three times over the next 40 years; I'd lose my place and then regain it. If anyone asked me to do a book about my life, I'd call it *The Hunt*. I am far more comfortable on the hunt than sitting over my kill and eating it.

Dreyfuss' diamonds: (top to bottom) *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Jaws*, and *Stand By Me*.



'Lucas is the only director I know who doesn't like directing'

The hunt began for you, in Hollywood terms, with *American Graffiti*. How was working with George Lucas?
He's the only director I know who doesn't like directing. We, the actors, rehearsed ourselves, and then he'd come up and say, "Is that the way you want to do it?" and set up the cameras.

People often regard you as Steven Spielberg's alter ego in *Jaws* and *Close Encounters*...
Steven never said that to me and I never asked it of him. If that was the case, Tom Hanks has now taken that position. He used me in the way he felt was best and I felt best used.

The characters you've played are driven and fast-talking and often irritating, but always likeable. Does that likeability come from you?
They are both my qualities – the ability to be irritating [*laughs*] and the fact that I am, of course, ultimately likeable! No, these are things that the camera's magic does to an audience, and an actor has little to do with it. But there are things that people [*would*] cast me for when I was younger. One of them was the ability to look up in absolute sincere awe at absolutely nothing!

Did you enjoy getting back in the water for *Piranha 3D*?
[*Laughs*] I never saw the whole film. I was asked to do it and I said no because I was involved in reviving Civic Education in public schools. And then Mr Weinstein made me an offer that I couldn't refuse. It was obviously a great contribution to my non-profit organisation – and my salary! – so I said yes. But that doesn't mean I have to go see the film.

You play adult Gordie, the writer, in *Stand By Me*. How much work did that involve?
It was one day. I can't remember if I even read the script but I had read the novella so I knew exactly where the character was coming from. I never think of *Stand By Me* as part of my body of work because it was so small an effort. But I had not reckoned with how large an impact the film itself would have. I'm very identified with it. People walk up to me and say nice things. **JG**

ETA | OUT NOW *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead 25th Anniversary Edition* is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.

PA, KOBAL

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Sound bites

Quotable dialogue from this month's movies – and their stars...



"You're fighting to be the girlfriend in a dumb comedy? For what?"
Reese Witherspoon has had it with rubbish roles for women.

"I don't think you've ever known a woman like me."
Wonder Woman (**Gal Gadot**) is one of a kind in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*.



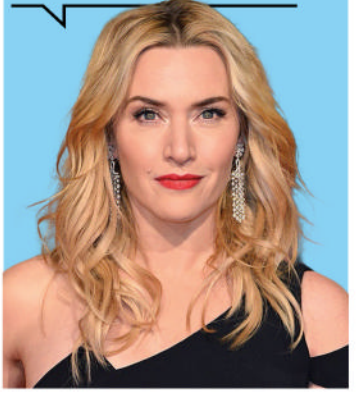


"We have a villain to rival Samuel L. Jackson – this new one is so brilliantly written I wish I could play it."
Kingsman 2's **Taron Egerton** has villain envy.

"Claire is a different person now. So yeah... It better not be heels." If **Bryce Dallas Howard** has her way heels will be extinct in *Jurassic World 2*.



"I think he could have actually fitted on that bit of door."
Kate Winslet finally confirms what we all suspected about *Titanic*'s ending.

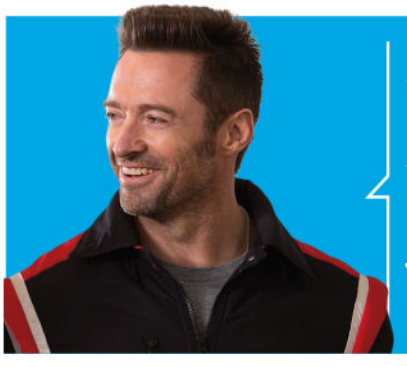


"We may be evolved, but deep down we're still animals."
Mr Big (**Maurice LaMarche**) gets philosophical in *Zootropolis*.



"The truth of the matter is that *Star Wars* cost us 10 new George Lucas films that would have been wonderful."
Francis Ford Coppola may be the only person unhappy *Star Wars* exists.





"I know what it's like to be written off. I can get you your moment."
Bronson Peary (**Hugh Jackman**) puts Eddie The Eagle on the path to greatness.

"I focus on being prepared... Something's coming."
Howard Stambler (**John Goodman**) is ready for the end of days in *10 Cloverfield Lane*.



"It's like a big, beautiful Cadillac with no engine inside it."
Stephen King still isn't keen on Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of *The Shining*.



PA IMAGES

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★★★★★ OUTSTANDING ★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ RUBBISH



TOTAL FILM OF THE MONTH

'*High-Rise* is a film of singular vision, black wit and audacity'

NEW RELEASES 11.03.16 - 08.04.16

OUT NOW		
BAFTA Shorts 2016	★★★	p52
The Benefactor	★★	p51
The Finest Hours	★★★	p55
Goodnight Mommy	★★★★	p55
Grimsby	★★	p52
How To Be Single	★★★	p55
Meru	★★★	p58
The Other Side Of The Door	★★★	p55
Secret In Their Eyes	★★	p51
Zoolander 2	★★★	p58

11 MARCH		
Anomalisa	★★★★	p54
The Here After	★★★★	p51
Kung Fu Panda 3	★★★★	p51
Next To Her	★★★★	p52
The Ones Below	★★★★	p57
The Witch	★★★★	p48

18 MARCH		
The Boy	★	p58
High-Rise	★★★★	p44
Marguerite	★★★★	p55
Norm Of The North	★★★	p53
The Pearl Button	★★★★	p56
Risen	★★	p51
Rock The Kasbah	★	p52

25 MARCH		
The Club	★★★★★	p55
Court	★★★	p56
Disorder	★★★	p53
Iona	★★★	p57
Speed Sisters	★★★★	p52
Welcome To Me	★★★★	p56
Zootropolis	★★★★	p46

28 MARCH		
E. Nesbit's The Railway Children	★★★	p58

1 APRIL		
Battle Mountain: Grahame Obree's Story	★★★	p57
Black Mountain Poets	★★★	p53
Eddie The Eagle	★★★★	p47
Papusza	★★★	p53
Ran	★★★★★	p58
Victoria	★★★	p53

8 APRIL		
Boulevard	★★	p57
Dheepan	★★★★	p53
I Am Belfast	★★★★	p57
Midnight Special	★★★★	p50

ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to gamesradar.com/totalfilm for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice	25 March
The Divergent Series: Allegiant	10 March
Fifty Shades Of Black	11 March
My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2	25 March
10 Cloverfield Lane	18 March

For more reviews visit totalfilm.com/reviews



The animals are on the loose in *Zootropolis*, page 46.



High-Rise

★★★★☆ Out 18 March

Welcome to the concrete jungle...

IF YOU ENJOY SHOTS of dogs leaping to safety from flaming near-doom in disaster movies, steel your eyes. It's no spoiler to say the mutt sizzles in this adaptation of J.G. Ballard's 1975 novel from *Kill List*/*Sightseers* director Ben Wheatley. As a paw is spit-roasted, the point is well made: faced with extreme material for his first adaptation, biggest budget and biggest cast (not his only hapless hound, mind – RIP, *Sightseers*' Poppy), Wheatley doesn't flinch.

Wheatley and screenwriter/wife Amy Jump's Ballard riff is unrulier than *Crash*, David Cronenberg's take on Ballard's other supposedly 'unfilmable' novel, also produced by Jeremy Thomas. But Wheatley and Jump pull off a similarly seamless author/filmmaker hybrid, honouring the novel while making it their own highly cinematic beast. The result drew mixed festival reviews, but roll with its anarchic satirical punch and you've got rare meat: a Brit-film of singular vision, blackened wit and dog-toasting audacity, cooked with such brio that its flaws seem like acceptable casualties.

As the dog cooks, we meet Tom Hiddleston's Dr Robert Laing, a seemingly vacant neurologist reclining on a Brutalist tower-block balcony in mid-'70s London. As placid as he seems, one of many clear mergers of the Ballard/Wheatley/Jump mindsets is established as the voiceover comments, "Now that so many residents were out of the way..." Hell is often other people in Wheatley/Jump's films, from the singing Christians in *Kill List* to the fellow holidaymakers up for the chop in *Sightseers*. Here, the resentment is largely class-based, a point emphasised as we rewind three months and Dr Laing moves into the isolated tower's 25th floor.

Under the skin

With his charm, looks, slippery personality and copious medicinal know-how as pass-keys, Laing floats between classes and floors. Just above him is Sienna Miller's free spirit Charlotte Melville; down below, there's arch-revolutionary documentary-maker Wilder (Luke Evans) and his class-strapped clan, pregnant wife Helen (Elisabeth Moss) and watchful son Toby (Louis Suc). Way up on top is the architect Anthony Royal (Jeremy Irons), who designed the tower as a "crucible for change", a kind of "experiment".

If Irons' roles in *Dead Ringers* and *M. Butterfly* provide a roundabout link to Cronenberg, so does a med-school scene

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Everyone enjoys a little time for reflection now and then.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

SHIVERS 1975
Sex slugs unleash a stifled tower block's seething lusts: love at first (para)site, Cronenberg-style.

FIGHT CLUB 1999
David Fincher drops Project Mayhem on generation Starbucks. Towers tumble, the satire stings.

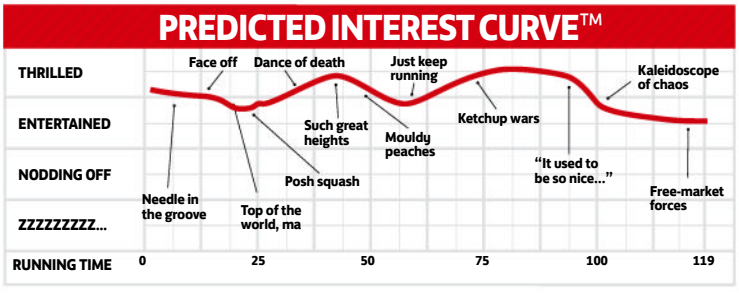
DREDD 2012
Karl Urban's Judge splats a megablock of dirty drug-niks in drokk'n'roll style. Sequel now please?

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

> 'A Brit-film of singular vision, blackened wit and dog-toasting audacity'

where the skin of a cadaver's head is peeled away in a kind of metaphor for society's thin surface. The results of Royal's experiment also recall the dabblings with sex parasites in Cronenberg's tower-block 'splatire' *Shivers*, where orgiastic chaos bloomed. As power cuts and class-sparked clashes over swimming pools stoke rage in *High-Rise*, society's lid blows and apocalyptic rioting erupts, with Che Guevara-loving Wilder its enthused advocate and Dr Laing our amoral eyes.

In Ballard's spirit, Wheatley and Jump play out this scenario as a retro-futurist sci-fi allegory. Ballard was writing about the near-future in the mid-'70s: Wheatley and Jump smartly stick with a period they know well. The overflowing bin bags, broken bottles, nasty sideburns and swingers' indulgences reek of late-'70s Britain, even before a familiar prime minister's voice intones over the climax.



Supermarket eek

If that final nod is faintly on the nose, one or two performances also stumble. Whether it's the effect of asking a large ensemble to evoke the chaos of a kids' party 'gone a bit *Game Of Thrones*' or not, a couple of comic turns overstate their grotesque case. Yet the core cast are electric. Hiddleston is terrifically nonchalant (and quite a mover) in a role that links a Wheatley/Ballard theme: the psychosis behind British reserve. Miller makes bright work of Charlotte, Moss' neglected wife is touching, the Oliver Reed-ish Evans is seedier than a '70s 'tache and Irons oozes curdled aristocracy. And he gives good press-ups.

Wheatley and Jump's flair for comic incongruity and deadpan dialogue is equally well pumped. Recalling the camping/killing collisions in *Sightseers*, weaponised tinned goods are deployed in an all-out supermarket civil war. A child scoffs cereal as he watches a man brutalise another over paint tins; as hell erupts, someone casually remarks, "There's some very unhappy bunnies bouncing around." That skewed sensibility extends to some fabulous surreal flourishes: horses and goats roam a top-floor garden paradise.

Even as the plot turns choppy, eye-watering marvels of artful detail keep its grip sharp. Mark Tildesley's lavish production design ranges from mouldering fruit bowls to posh parties decadent enough to cause a French revolution. Indelible money shots include a kaleidoscope of death and a suicide plunge, while the music is practically an extra character. Clint Mansell's deliciously jaunty, drunk-baroque score ingeniously offsets the darkness; equally startling is a lush ABBA cover by Bristol torch-noir titans Portishead.

As Portishead's Beth Gibbons coos her 'SOS', the cry for help comes too late for the dog. But anyone who likes their cinema off-piste should ignore the sniffier reviews and give Wheatley's call the chance it deserves: a good shot at some cult love.

Kevin Harley

THE VERDICT Wheatley, Jump, Hiddleston and co occupy Ballard's towering inferno with brazen style. If the plot wobbles precipitously, chalk it up to the high-rise ambition of a genuinely wayward Brit-film one-off.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Ben Wheatley **Starring** Tom Hiddleston, Jeremy Irons, Sienna Miller, Luke Evans, Elisabeth Moss, Keeley Hawes **Screenplay** Amy Jump **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running time** 119 mins



Police cutbacks had gone too far this time.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

WATERSHIP DOWN 1978
Cartoon bunnies go on the run in Martin Rosen's 24-carrot adap of Richard Adams' novel.

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT 1988
Kathleen Turner isn't bad (she's just drawn that way) in Robert Zemeckis' game-changer.

OVER THE HEDGE 2006
Woodland creatures go wild in suburbia in DreamWorks' comic strip-inspired animation.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

Zootropolis

★★★★☆ Out 25 March **Beasts of one nation...**

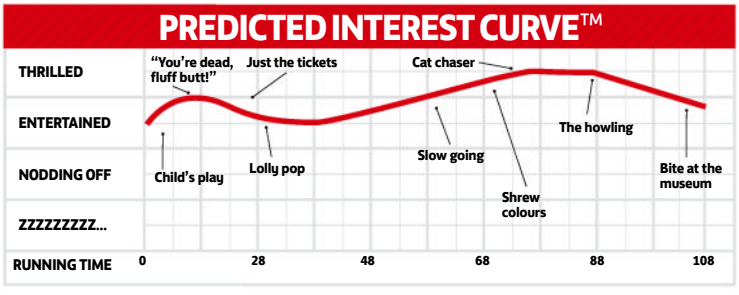
DISNEY'S NOBLE TRADITION of cartoon anthropomorphism stretches all the way back to Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. So there's something comfortingly circular about having another bunny – Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin), a rookie cop from the back of beyond striving to make her mark in a mammal-only metropolis – at the heart of its latest animated caper, even if it does owe just as much to DreamWorks and Aardman as it does to such House Of Mouse faves as *The Lion King* and *Robin Hood*.

The latter, incidentally, was possibly the inspiration for the movie's male lead, a wily fox – snarkily voiced by Jason Bateman – who reluctantly joins forces with Judy to solve a case involving mysterious animal disappearances. The results take them all over an impeccably realised alt-world that encompasses bustling city, icy-tundra and Amazonian-rainforest zones, not to mention a miniature enclave for rodents that provides the location for one of the film's most inventive set-pieces.

That these include a subway car chase reminiscent of *Speed* and a rope bridge escape in the vein of *Indiana Jones* is testament to the film's admirable ambition and relentless momentum. It's so fast-paced, in fact, that there's barely time to register all the visual and verbal gags that pepper the screen: advertisements for 'Hoof Locker' or 'Urban Snoutfitters' for example, or a poster for a musical called *Rats*. There's even a meta-gag involving pirate DVDs (*Wreck-It Rhino*, anyone?) – though perhaps directors Byron Howard and Rich Moore are being a little too self-indulgent when they have Judy's buffalo police chief (Idris Elba, gruffly warming up for his voice roles in *The Jungle Book* and *Finding Dory*) namedrop a certain *Frozen* ear-worm.

> 'An entertaining romp with literally endless sequel potential'

It's fair to say, too, that a carrot-shaped recording device has rather too much input in a noir-ish plot whose existential quandary (can predators and prey co-exist peacefully?) is the same one that motored the first *Madagascar*. (It also gives rise to scenes involving snarling, claw-baring beasties that might be a touch too intense for very young children.) But overall, *Zootropolis* is a witty, creative and entertaining romp with literally endless sequel potential and the biggest collection of four-legged critters this side of Noah. (The sloths who run the 'Department of Mammal Vehicles' are... a... scream.) In Goodwin's Judy meanwhile, it has a heroine so plucky, resourceful and a-doe-rable we can even forgive her when she's doling out parking tickets. **Neil Smith**



THE VERDICT No instant Disney classic, but a fast and furry-ious caper with endless gags, a fizzy fox-bunny double act and Shakira as a singing gazelle.

› **Certificate** PG **Directors** Byron Howard, Rich Moore **Starring** Ginnifer Goodwin, Jason Bateman, Idris Elba, Jenny Slate, J.K. Simmons, Bonnie Hunt, Octavia Spencer **Screenplay** Jared Bush, Phil Johnston **Distributor** Walt Disney **Running time** 108 mins

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"No, Eddie, this one is small. The real one is far away."

Eddie The Eagle

★★★★☆ Out 1 April **Hope against slope...**

IF, WHEN YOU HEAR THE NAME Eddie The Eagle you think 'gurning, speccy bloke who was rubbish at ski jumping in the 1980s', you need to see this movie. If, when you hear the name Eddie The Eagle you think 'Who?' you *still* need to see it. Because despite the slightly bizarre subject matter – the tale of a man who desperately wants to compete at the Winter Olympics, fully aware he's far from world-class – Dexter Fletcher's semi-biopic dramedy is likely to be the most purely uplifting film of the year.

Recap for anyone under 35: Eddie Edwards was a slightly odd, very long-sighted guy who – against the Olympic Committee's protests and without proper funding or training –bagged a place at Calgary in 1988, charming spectators and becoming an overnight celeb.

Fresh from his breakout role in *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, Taron Egerton turns strawberry blonde and dons bottle-bottom glasses to transform himself perfectly into the embodiment of Eddie – rubber-faced and full of tics and twitches. Hugh Jackman is Eddie's fictional coach – a disgraced former ski-jump champ who's hit the bottle hard. Yes, it's a terrible cliché. Fletcher's film is undeniably corny, but also so sincere and tear-inducing that it ultimately doesn't matter.

'Undeniably corny, but so sincere that it doesn't matter'

Although he's dealing with an underdog, the director approaches his material with ambition of which Eddie himself would be proud. The vertiginous POV shots from the top of a 70-metre ski jump are dizzying and terrifying, while Jackman's easy charm and Christopher Walken's cameo bring a dash of Hollywood glamour.

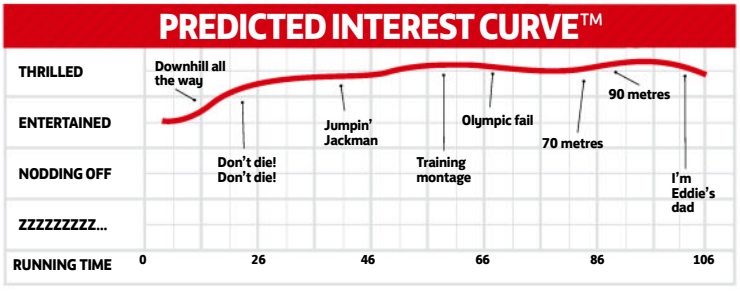
ETE will inevitably draw comparisons to that other Calgary Olympics tale *Cool Runnings* (there's even a gag acknowledging the 1993 hit). But in many ways *Eddie* is also the spiritual sibling of *Rush*; like Ron Howard's film, it's adrenaline-pumped and packed with men competing at a sport that genuinely might kill them. Our hero even has a rival/ally in Finnish star ski-jumper Matti Nykänen (Edvin Endre) who in real life won three gold medals that year. Only Eddie doesn't go in for champagne, fast cars and women; instead, he drinks milk and dotes on his mum.

Reminiscent of vintage Richard Curtis, this is a celebration of Britishness that will no doubt export well. Except it's not about floppy hair and posh flats in Notting Hill, but a plasterer from Cheltenham who fearlessly refused to be judged by anyone's standards but his own. **Rosie Fletcher**

THE VERDICT From niche subject matter, Fletcher's crafted a movie that's both universal but also unashamedly, gloriously British. Very funny, genuinely moving and endlessly good-natured.

› **Certificate** PG **Director** Dexter Fletcher **Starring** Taron Egerton, Hugh Jackman, Christopher Walken, Jo Hartley, Edvin Endre **Screenplay** Sean Macaulay, Simon Kelton **Distributor** Lionsgate **Running Time** 106 minutes

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

COOL RUNNINGS 1993
Jamaica's bobsledders become heroes without coming first in another true underdog story from Calgary '88.

RUSH 2013
Ron Howard's tale of real-life rival F1 drivers exhilarates even if you know nada about racing.

WHIPLASH 2014
A movie about a jazz drummer that sounded unpromising on paper but proved a triumph.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews



The Witch

★★★★☆ Out 11 March

Do you like *really* scary movies?

THE BIGGEST THREAT in George Romero's zombie movies isn't the lurching, flesh-chomping hordes but the surviving humans' inability to pull together; from discord and disharmony come death. Much the same can be said of Robert Eggers' scrupulously chilling debut. Subtitled 'A New-England Folktale' and gleaning some of its rough-hewn, period-poetic diction from journals written in the mid-17th century, *The Witch*, for all its genre know-how, would work almost as well if stripped of supernatural elements. Yes, there are images of unnatural happenings so potent as to elicit audible gasps from the audience. But the fracturing of a family at the narrative's poisoned heart can equally be attributed to the severity of patriarchal rule, fanatical religion and hardscrabble agrarian life.

The 1630s. Banished from a plantation for his proudly stubborn beliefs, a farmer, William (Ralph Ineson), takes his wife, Katherine (Katie Dickie), and five children to set up home on the edge of a wood. Here, in striking isolation, the atmosphere incrementally ratchets from disquietude to hysteria over 90 taut, unforgiving minutes. It begins when the youngest child, an infant named Samuel, inexplicably disappears while being safeguarded by his teenage sister, Thomasin (Anya Taylor-Joy). The loss leads to guilt, prayers and recriminations, all intensified when the crop fails. Then Caleb (Harvey Scrimshaw), the second eldest after Thomasin, is found catatonic in the woods. The family is imploding, and it's not long before young twins Mercy and Jonas (Ellie Grainger, Lucas Dawson) are taking their older sister at her taunting word and proclaiming her a witch. Worse, their mother and father are paying heed...

Candle with care

Conjuring the spirit of such convincing occult dramas as Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Day Of Wrath*, Michael Reeves' *Witchfinder General* and Piers Haggard's *The Blood On Satan's Claw*, *The Witch* favours verisimilitude,

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The brambles had really done a number on her hair.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

THE SHINING
1980
Ghosts or madness? Either way, the Torrance family splinter like an axed bathroom door.

THE CRUCIBLE
1996
The Witch is set about 50 years before the Salem witch trials, which are dealt with here.

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT
1999
More woods. More witches (maybe). More creeping dread. And another pant-wetting finale.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

'The Witch favours insidious dread over cheap shocks'

The Witch is a slow film, a sincere film, accumulating atmosphere one shiver at a time. The wind whistles, the farmyard animals grunt and the birds caw; the score, all caterwauling cellos and choral chants, is the Devil's orchestra – the sonic equivalent of a Hieronymus Bosch painting.

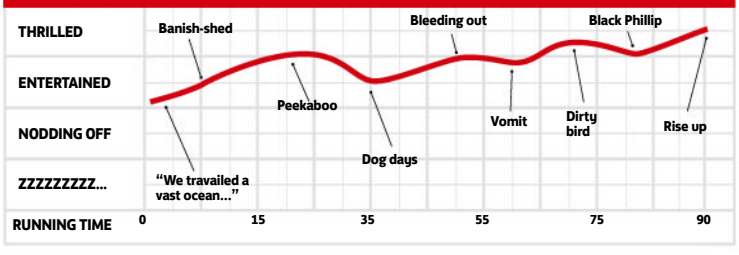
Goat dimension

But after all the suggestion, shadows and shudders, Eggers is not afraid to show and tell, and demonstrates a neat knack for composing nightmare images. One involves a goat, another a raven: Satanic staples both but here treated in ways that are anything but hoary. The climax, too, pours new blood from old bottles, and is scary enough to mute arguments that Eggers might have done better to not sacrifice ambiguity for full-throttle terror. (As John Carpenter said when asked about embracing show-stopping visuals with *The Thing* after the purist suspense of *Halloween*, when you've got something this good, you don't hide it.)

The Witch is perhaps too slow and its dialogue too archly archaic for it to be this year's crossover horror hit a la *It Follows*, but if you like the thought of *The Exorcist* taking place in Terrence Malick's *The New World*, then this is for you. It certainly rewards patience, and all credit to Eggers and his cast for sticking to their beliefs. The performances, like the direction, are unswerving in their conviction, and special mention should go to Anya Taylor-Joy as Thomasin. A real find, her pale face demands scrutiny – blank and expressive, guileless and cunning – just as her changing body mesmerises Caleb. *The Witch* is, after all, a prologue to the Salem witch trials, so it is correct that an unhealthy fear of female sexuality should be stirred into the brew of religious fundamentalism and plain old cabin fever. It's Eggers' ability to keep the lid on all this bubbling hysteria until the very moment he wants it to blow sky-high that makes *The Witch* so effective.

Jamie Graham

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



formal exactitude and insidious dread over cheap shocks. Eggers, a native of New England, unfailingly transports viewers to a forbidding time and place through the specificity of his costumes, sets and sound design, while DoP Jarin Blaschke's austere images are painted in natural light – and, of course, darkness; the pale moon and flickering candles can rarely brighten the edges of the frame.

Such stylistic rigour is in opposition to the found-footage films that have dominated the horror genre this century. In place of smeared visuals delivered by churning cameras is a gallery of precisely framed pictures. Exteriors comprise misty greys and sepulchral greens; those candle-lit interiors possess an amber tint evocative of silent cinema. In fact, the only bright spots in Eggers' film are the flashes of red – a cloak during an especially heart-stopping sequence and sheets of blood that can't be scrubbed from viewers' eyeballs, such is the viciousness and veracity with which they're unloosed.

THE VERDICT Robert Eggers' measured, meticulous debut builds into one of the most genuinely scary horror movies of recent years.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Robert Eggers **Starring** Anya Taylor-Joy, Ralph Ineson, Katie Dickie, Harvey Scrimshaw **Screenplay** Robert Eggers **Distributor** Universal **Running time** 93 mins



Quadruple denim is the world's riskiest fashion choice.

Midnight Special

★★★★☆ Out 8 April **Kylo Ren is no match for this kid...**

WHEN JOHN CARPENTER'S *The Thing* flopped at cinemas, Universal booted him off an adaptation of Stephen King's *Firestarter*, about a father and his pyrotechnic daughter on the run from government types desiring to harness the child's gift/curse. Now, 34 years on, writer/director Jeff Nichols (*Take Shelter*, *Mud*) at last allows us to see, pretty much, how that film might have turned out – *Midnight Special* taps into the Carpenter mood (*Starman* is a key influence) as a father and his mysterious son flee US agents.

Plot-wise, there's not much more to it, with Nichols drip-feeding only the barest of information. Just why eight-year-old Alton (Jaeden Lieberher) is the subject of an NSA boyhunt headed up by Sevier (Adam Driver, as compelling here as he was as Kylo Ren) is not initially clear, though our curiosity is piqued by the dark goggles strapped over his eyes and the need to travel only at night. Dad Roy (Michael Shannon) is aided on the road by Lucas (Joel Edgerton) and Sarah (Kirsten Dunst), whose connections to the action will also emerge with time, while another threat to Alton arrives in the form of Calvin Meyer (Sam Shephard), the leader of a religious sect.

> 'The set-pieces, when they erupt, are spectacular'

Here, mood is all. Nichols might wholly embrace the paranormal that he before flirted with in *Take Shelter*, but *Midnight Special* is his most grounded film to date. Reality and mundanity are built from the ground up: dusky, dust-bowl landscapes; sober performances; utilitarian motels used as safe houses; a few ominous piano keys by way of score; and an economic camera style that needs only a slow pan or a shift of focus to rustle up an excitement that Michael Bay could only dream of.

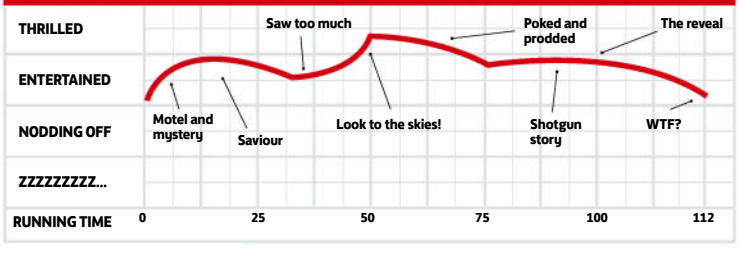
Which isn't to say that shit don't get crazy. The set-pieces, when they erupt, are spectacular (and that applies as much to a common fistfight as some otherworldly phenomena outside a gas station), and the climactic revelation, though reliant on conspicuous CGI, is a conceptual treat.

Whether *Midnight Special* adds up to anything beyond a supremely well-crafted piece of genre filmmaking is questionable, though it does recognise the human need for hope, love and meaning. But taken as a throwback to the thrillers of Carpenter and Spielberg's cinema of wonder, it is special indeed. Not least because it honours its influences and yet remains, first and foremost, a Jeff Nichols film. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT Supernaturalism for sceptics: teaming up for the fourth time, Nichols and Shannon deliver another slow-burn, grounded triumph.

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Jeff Nichols **Starring** Michael Shannon, Jaeden Lieberher, Joel Edgerton, Kirsten Dunst **Screenplay** Jeff Nichols **Distributor** eOne **Running time** 112 mins

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

CARRIE 1976
The go-to 'kid-with-powers' movie. But Nichols eschews De Palma's showiness.

SUPER 8 2011
J.J. Abrams starts the '80s throwback trend. See also *The Guest* and *Cold In July*.

TAKE SHELTER 2011
Apocalyptic visions lead family man Shannon to build a bunker. But is he the real threat?

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

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The burping contest had reached its final round.

Kung Fu Panda 3

★★★★☆ Out 11 March **He eats shoots, he scores.**

DREAMWORKS' CHOP-SOCKY saga has always been a bit of an odd one. Plus-size panda Po (Jack Black) is a superhero slacker who can dropkick an entire army of ninja rhinos but still has trouble walking up the stairs. He's been raised by a goose, trained by Dustin Hoffman and is in a gang with five A-list animal Avengers who never really do very much. Luckily, three films in, the franchise is still hilarious, still slickly animated and still able to kick furry butt.

Mixing the training montages of the first film (2008) with the soul searching of the second (2011), part three is pure *Star Wars*. Po must learn to master the Force-like power of Ch'i and find out who his father really is before the new dark side baddie sucks him into the spirit realm with an army of jade zombies. Along the way, our hero takes a detour to his long-lost homeland (a cute mountaintop panda sanctuary that steals jokes from every YouTube video ever shared) and patches things up with his adoptive goose dad before facing an epic final set-piece that feels every inch the trilogy-closer.

Some of the newbies are grossly underused (Kate Hudson's sassy panda-ess Mei Mei gets a cracking introduction and then disappears from the film altogether), but J.K. Simmons' gravel-voiced demon bull Kai and, most notably, Bryan Cranston's bumbling Li both threaten to steal the film. It's still Black's show, though. Keeping up the knockout quips and making Po seem as huggable as possible amid all the flying feet and fists, he helps the series feel ever more heartfelt with age.

Animated with exceptional depth and beauty by co-directors Jennifer Yuh and Alessandro Carloni (and given epic new heft by Hans Zimmer in the orchestra pit), it's a rare 'toon franchise that can grow up so quickly and still giggle at its own butt jokes. **Paul Bradshaw**

THE VERDICT DreamWorks' follow-up ratchets up the awesomeness again – with more heart, more fun and at least two new characters you'd happily welcome back for a four-quel.

› **Certificate** PG **Directors** Alessandro Carloni, Jennifer Yuh **Starring** Jack Black, Bryan Cranston, Dustin Hoffman, Angelina Jolie, J.K. Simmons **Screenplay** Jonathan Aibel, Glenn Berger **Distributor** 20th Century Fox **Running time** 95 mins



THE BENEFACTOR

★★☆☆☆ Out now

RICHARD GERE IS THE MILLIONAIRE philanthropist who starts throwing cash at Dakota Fanning and Theo James' debt-ridden newlyweds in director Andrew Renzi's debut indie – a sad little fable about a lonely, eccentric old morphine addict trying to buy his way into someone else's family. It's an interesting idea for a film that's sadly squandered by Renzi's overwritten script, bogged down with flashbacks, plot detours and too many opportunities for Gere to grandstand. All three stars are left adrift in a dull drama filled with good intentions and not a whole lot else. **Paul Bradshaw**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 91 mins



SECRET IN THEIR EYES

★★☆☆☆ Out now

A POINTLESS HOLLYWOOD REMAKE OF the 2009 Oscar-winning Argentinian film that appears to exist solely to eliminate the need for subtitles. The story centres on Ray (Chiwetel Ejiofor), a former FBI agent who's still haunted by a 13-year-old murder mystery. While snooping around a mosque during a counter-terrorism case, he discovers the body of his partner Jess' (Julia Roberts) daughter in a dumpster. Thereafter the film flashes back and forth – clunkily – between 2002 and the present to reveal how the killings are linked. It's a fine story, but you already saw the better, tauter version half a decade ago. **Ken McIntyre**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 111 mins



RISEN

★★☆☆☆ Out 18 March

RELEASED JUST IN TIME FOR EASTER, *Risen* retells the Resurrection as police procedural, with Roman army tribune Clavius (a miserable-looking Joseph Fiennes) having been tasked to track down the missing body of Christ. It's a novel take on a Biblical classic, but CSI: Judea only lasts for about 30 minutes before Clavius discovers "Yeshua" (Cliff Curtis) alive and grinning. It's here that Kevin Reynolds' (*Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*) film becomes a blunt tool, one that abandons both drama and originality in favour of preaching to the choir. The end result feels like an old, cheap TV movie. **Stephen Kelly**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 107mins



THE HERE AFTER

★★★★☆ Out 11 March

COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL BENEFITS from compelling control in this debut from Sweden's Magnus von Horn. Swedish pop star Ulrik Munther is persuasively sulky as John, a teenager released to his community and farming family after a stint inside for a slow-revealed crime. Going straight is hard: locals attack him, schoolmates throw punches, school newbie Malin's (Loa Ek) interest doesn't help much. Violence seems inevitable but Von Horn plots cause and consequence with patient precision: his tale of crime, culpability and rough justice leaves a more lingering impression for it. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 102 mins


They'd placed the lounger a little too close to the sun.

Grimsby

★★☆☆☆ Out now

Cohen off the rails...

THERE'S A JUMBO-SIZED GAG in Sacha Baron Cohen's latest that's as hilariously outrageous as anything in *Borat*. But on the whole, *Grimsby* has its creator-slash-star operating on a tamer, more sentimental register than usual, even when giving himself a pube goatee or doing alarming things to a certain ex-child actor.

The strange thing about *Grimsby* is that it works much better as a Bond-spoofing actioner than it does as a politically incorrect rib-tickler – which might have something to do with it being Louis Leterrier behind the camera instead of Cohen's usual collaborator Larry Charles. The *Transporter* man deftly serves up a battery of explosive set-pieces, kicking off with a pursuit through an African market-place viewed from the FPS-style perspective of MI6 super-spy Sebastian Butcher (Mark Strong). Yet he's on shakier ground when the focus shifts to Butcher's feckless sibling Nobby (Baron Cohen): a beer-swilling, football-loving benefits cheat who tracks Seb down after 28 years for what he hopes will be an emotional reunion.

What he does, of course, is botch up Sebastian's current mission to such a degree they are immediately placed on Interpol's most-wanted list, forcing them to hide out in their home town of Grimsby where Nobby ekes a suitably *Shameless* life with his slobbish girlfriend (Rebel Wilson, given as little to do as Penélope Cruz and Isla Fisher are in their thankless roles as glamorous villain and MI6 helpmate respectively). It's a cartoonish portrait of the British underclass, but it's one we've seen before, not least from the film's own under-utilised supporting players (Ricky Tomlinson, Johnny Vegas).

Nobby, in short, isn't an inspired enough creation to justify a vehicle of his own. And though lovers of Baron Cohen's outré humour will probably delight at the indignities heaped on a young wheelchair user and copious jokes involving bodily fluids, they're a poor substitute for the fearless, skewering satire we know he's capable of. **Neil Smith**

THE VERDICT For all its shock tactics, some involving animals, *Grimsby* is a so-so addition to the Cohen canon whose daring doesn't extend to writing its female characters a single funny line.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Louis Leterrier **Starring** Sacha Baron Cohen, Mark Strong, Isla Fisher, Rebel Wilson, Penélope Cruz, Gabourey Sidibe **Screenplay** Phil Johnston, Peter Baynham, Sacha Baron Cohen **Distributor** Sony

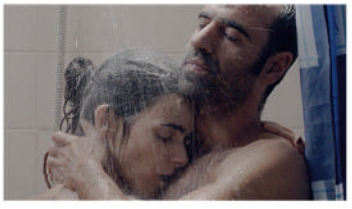


BAFTA SHORTS 2016

★★★☆☆ Out now

Two individuals fall from a great height in this compilation of this year's BAFTA short-film nominees. One, the subject of *Over*, is an asylum seeker concealed in a plane's wheel-well. The other, in *Manoman*, is a puppet – one of two showcased here, the other being a stop-motion fetishist contemplating suicide in *Edmond*. Add Kate Dickie as a 999 call handler in (deservedly) winning entry *Operator* and naked Spartans fighting a line-drawn battle to the death in *Prologue* and it's the very definition of a mixed bag. A shame, though, that rights issues kept the eighth nominee – Brighton-set romance *Elephant* – out. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 77 mins



NEXT TO HER

★★★★☆ Out 11 March

ISRAELI DIRECTOR ASAF KORMAN'S debut draws on personal experience: it's inspired by the relationship between his wife, Liron Ben-Shlush (who also writes and stars), and her mentally disabled sister. Struggling to cope on her own, Chelli (Ben-Shlush) is forced to leave her sister Gabby (Dana Ivgy) in a day-care programme. With both women unhealthily dependent on each other, the rift causes more problems than it solves, with Chelli seeking awkward solace in a new boyfriend. It might leave you utterly traumatised, but this is one of the most daring, sensitive love stories in recent memory. **Paul Bradshaw**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 89 mins



ROCK THE KASBAH

★☆☆☆☆ Out 18 March

BASED – SO LOOSELY IT BARELY counts – on Setara Hussainzada, the first woman to sing on *Afghan Idol*, Barry Levinson's straggly sort-of-comedy is staggeringly misconceived. Showing little confidence in what should have been its central character (Leem Lubany) it relies on Bill Murray's seedy Kabul-stranded talent manager, Bruce Willis's grumpy merc, and Kate Hudson's career prostitute to tell a supposed story of female emancipation. Extracting humour amid all the car bombs and arms deals would require Herculean levels of charm, which not even a particularly unbothered Murray summons. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 106 mins



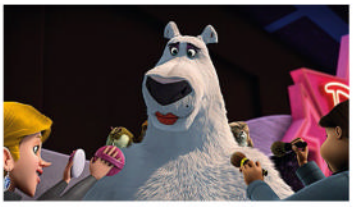
SPEED SISTERS

★★★★½ Out 25 March

WHENEVER WOMEN MANAGE TO break into the macho world of car racing it's a cause for celebration. But when they do it in Palestine, it's borderline revolutionary. 'The Speed Sisters' are an all-female, all-Arab racing team that tear around the West Bank wearing helmets instead of hijabs – not because they want to start a political debate, but because they're mad petrol-heads who are really good at what they do. Director Amber Fares finds a frankly astounding subject for her first feature-length doc, using the story of a few brave sportswomen to shine a bright headlamp on lives lived under occupation. **Paul Bradshaw**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 80 mins

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NORM OF THE NORTH

★★★☆☆ Out 18 March

NORM (ROB SCHNEIDER) IS A heart-of-gold polar bear who just happens to be able to understand and speak English. Uncovering a plot by greedy land baron Mr. Greene (Ken Jeong) to build condos in the Arctic, naturally he trundles off to the big city with his lemming pals to make things right. Norm's loony little sidekicks are a clear attempt to cash in on Minion-mania and the plot is essentially every '80s family flick ever made, but the warm familiarity charms more often than it grates. A harmless kids' toon that's probably the least annoying Schneider vehicle in years. **Ken McIntyre**

› **Certificate** U **Running time** 90 mins

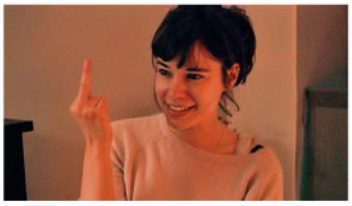


PAPUSZA

★★★☆☆ Out 1 April

SUMPTUOUS BLACK-AND-WHITE images don't quite compensate for choppy plotting in Joanna Kos-Krauze and Krzysztof Krauze's (*My Nikifor*) ambitious but awkward quasi-biopic of Polish-Romani poet Bronisława Wajs (played over 80-ish years, with effective ageing work, by Jowita Budnik). Immaculately composed in loving widescreen, the portrait of the Gypsy camps brims with life. But the non-linear narrative makes getting a fix on the film's subject hard: as Wajs retreats into the rapturous images, the sensory feast leaves the emotions under-engaged. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 131 mins

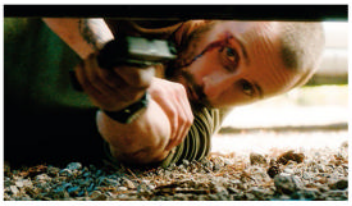


VICTORIA

★★★☆☆ Out 1 April

NO EDITOR IS CREDITED IN GERMAN writer/director Sebastian Schipper's high-concept drama, which was shot in one uninterrupted take lasting two and quarter hours on the streets of Berlin. Leaving a techno club in the middle of the night, lonely 20-something Victoria (Laia Costa) is befriended by genial hoodlum Sonne (Frederick Lau) and his pals, but what starts out as a sweet-natured romance swiftly finds its lovers mounting an armed bank robbery. There are some huge narrative implausibilities, but Schipper's virtuoso style propels us through his characters' highs and lows. Ace performances, too. **Tom Dawson**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 138 mins



DISORDER

★★★☆☆ Out 25 March

SUFFERING FROM – WE PRESUME – PTSD, recently demobbed soldier Matthias Schoenaerts finds himself prone to bouts of rage and tinnitus squeals in French co-writer/director Alice Winocour's moody thriller. Between tours of Afghanistan, he scratches a living as the bodyguard to a shady businessman and family, although mostly this involves perving over bored wife Diane Kruger, while repeatedly endangering them with his paranoid delusions. Schoenaerts is intense as always, and Winocour puts us in his place with nervy bursts of too-loud electro, but the pace is so slow-burn it's often just slow. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 98 mins

Dheepan

★★★★☆ Out 8 April

Surviving suburbia...

LIKE 1995'S LA HAINE, DHEEPAN is a slice of social realism set in a run-down Parisian housing project. And despite some significant differences from Mathieu Kassovitz's iconic black-and-whiter, it packs a similarly fearsome punch. But then you'd expect nothing less from Jacques Audiard, the Gallic director behind awards magnets *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* and *A Prophet*. This latest urban drama, which won the Palme d'Or when it bowed in Cannes last year, is equally incendiary.

The story begins, briefly, in Sri Lanka, where three strangers are thrown together and, after being given passports belonging to those already dead, form a 'fake' family to help escape a country ravaged by civil war. Arriving in France, these refugees cling to each other in hopes of survival. A former Tamil Tiger fighter, Dheepan (Jesuthasan Antonythasan) soon finds a job as the caretaker in a bleak Paris banlieue, while his 'wife' Yalini (Kalieaswari Srinivasan) takes on cooking and cleaning for an ailing resident.

With their 'child' Illayaal (Claudine Vinasithamby) attending school, hardships are endured and normality sought, the trio trying to make the best of their tough situation. But when Brahim (Vincent Rottiers), the leader of a local gang of drug dealers and nephew to the man Yalini cares for, returns from a stint in prison, the dynamic changes; already simmering below the surface, violence erupts – although how things play out may well come as a surprise.

Some will find the stylised, Scorsese-esque finale out of leftfield, but Audiard arguably leads us to it; the housing estate where much of the action takes place begins to take on a hellish Dante-like feel to it, thanks to cinematographer Éponine Momenceau's impressionistic visuals. Extracting credible performances from his leads – gentle, tender but capable of the reverse – Audiard and his team have crafted a story that feels utterly relevant to the refugee crisis that has gripped Europe this past year. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT Another powerful, provocative drama from Audiard. The ending will be divisive, but there's an undeniable sense of urgency here.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Jacques Audiard **Starring** Jesuthasan Antonythasan, Kalieaswari Srinivasan, Vincent Rottiers, Marc Zinga **Screenplay** Jacques Audiard, Thomas Bidegain, Noé Debré **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running time** 115 mins



Dheepan (Jesuthasan Antonythasan) is an ex-Tamil Tiger refugee.



It was only then that he noticed his detachable face.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

BEING JOHN MALKOVICH 1999
Kaufman's debut feature as a writer is the tale of a puppeteer who discovers a portal into the titular actor's head.

LOST IN TRANSLATION 2003
Scarlett Johansson, adrift in a soulless hotel, is then enlivened by a chance connection.

FANTASTIC MR. FOX 2009
Another idiosyncratic auteur, Mr. Wes Anderson, tries his graceful hand at animation.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/reviews

Anomalisa

★★★★☆ Out 11 March **Another string to Kaufman's bow...**

CHARLIE KAUFMAN RETURNS from a seven-year absence with a stop-motion animation populated by foot-tall puppets made of metal, rubber and glass. All but two of the puppets – male, female, adult, child – are voiced by Tom Noonan, and the majority of the action plays out in a hotel named Al Fregoli, as in 'Fregoli delusion', a psychiatric disorder whereby the sufferer believes everybody else is in fact the same person in a variety of disguises. And there's a puppet sex scene that has landed *Anomalisa* an R-rating in the US for 'graphic nudity'. Yet far from being the most 'Kaufmanesque' (read: bonkers) offering to date from the brain behind *Being John Malkovich*, *Adaptation.*, *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* and *Synecdoche, New York*, this is his most human and recognisable work.

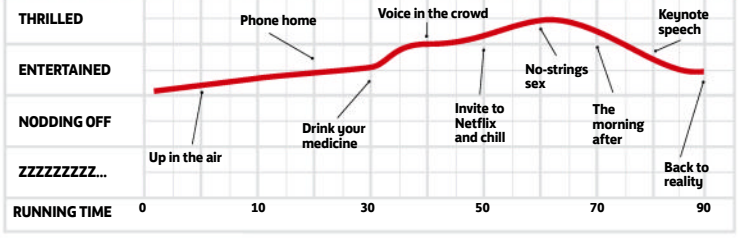
Adapted from Kaufman's 'sound play', funded on Kickstarter and co-directed by Duke Johnson (the man behind the stop-motion Christmas episode of *Community*), *Anomalisa* sees inspirational speaker Michael Stone (voiced, perfectly, by David Thewlis) fly into Cincinnati to lecture a convention of customer service professionals. Ensconced in his hotel room, he ponders his rocky marriage, arranges a disastrous drink with an ex and generally languishes in existential despair. Then, out of the drone of voices that fill the hotel (all, remember, voiced without modulation by Noonan), he hears a unique cadence – and so begins a startling night of connection with Lisa (Jennifer Jason Leigh, superb), a shy-but-garrulous small-town telesales agent.

> 'Guaranteed to elicit a quivering emotional response'

No stranger to the promotional duties that come with releasing a film, Kaufman clearly knows, all too well, the life of jetting into cities to stay a single night in a blandly tasteful hotel, and the manifold details of *Anomalisa*'s contained world are precisely correct. Crucially, this observational keenness extends beyond furnishings and elevator muzak to human behaviour, with Michael's funk, and his heart's unexpected swelling upon meeting the anomaly that is Lisa, guaranteed to elicit a quivering emotional response from viewers. And as for that sex scene... It's closer to the desperate awkwardness of *Blue Valentine*'s motel encounter than the hilarious smut of *Team America*, though there are gentle laughs, plus tenderness and, yes, eroticism.

After 2015 brought us such splendours as *Inside Out*, *Shaun The Sheep Movie* and *Song Of The Sea* – amplifying claims that we're enjoying a golden age of animation – 2016 has a lot to live up to. *Anomalisa* suggests it might just do it. **Jamie Graham**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



THE VERDICT Charlie Kaufman shows us what it is to be human. Plus the best use of Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun' in the movies.

› **Certificate** 15 **Directors** Charlie Kaufman, Duke Johnson **Starring** David Thewlis, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Tom Noonan **Screenplay** Charlie Kaufman **Distributor** Curzon Artificial Eye **Running time** 90 mins

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How To Be Single

★★★☆☆ Out now Rebel with a cause...

YOU'D BE FORGIVEN FOR thinking that after mooning President Obama (in *Pitch Perfect 2*) and flashing her boobs (sort of) at the 2013 MTV Awards, Rebel Wilson might be running low on outrageous things to do. You'd be wrong – *How To Be Single* unleashes the Aussie in her filthiest, flirtiest and – yes – funniest role to date. Name-checking the film's title, her paralegal Robin becomes a mentor to newly single co-worker Alice (Dakota Johnson), leading her on a tour of New York's nightlife, variously advising her on texting, self-grooming ("It's like you dropped your hairbrush and your vagina caught it") and how to power through a hangover.

Energising every scene she's in, Wilson manifests like the genie from *Aladdin* to sprinkle one-liners and boozy life lessons throughout. But the film stutters in her absence. While Johnson is a likeable if subdued lead (her schmaltzy narration is kept to a tolerable minimum), writers Abby Kohn, Marc Silverstein and Dana Fox struggle to imbue their remaining women with much significant vim. Of those, Alison Brie's sad-sack online dating obsessive appears to have stumbled in from *Sex And The City* (though she is at the centre of a great hair-ripping public meltdown), and Leslie Mann strives for sensitivity in her IVF subplot, but is still lumbered with outdated 'neurotic singleton' cliches.

Still, *HTBS* is leagues ahead of the last film based on a Liz Tuccillo novel; 2009's *He's Just Not That Into You* has none of *Single*'s fizz. Dumping the romcom gloss of *Love, Rosie*, director Christian Ritter depicts New York as a hip, grungy wonderland – cinematographer Christian Rein deserves credit for finding innovative new ways to shoot the world's most screen-weary city. Ultimately, *HTBS* is *Girls* meets *Sex And The City*; a knowing, well-intentioned romantic comedy that celebrates self-empowerment even as it assures us we'll all find Mr Right one day. **Josh Winning**

THE VERDICT Rebel Wilson steals the show in an anti-Valentine-com that tries to update the *Sex And The City* formula, and comes surprisingly close. The Big Apple's rarely looked juicier.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Christian Ditter **Starring** Dakota Johnson, Rebel Wilson, Alison Brie, Leslie Mann **Screenplay** Dana Fox, Abby Kohn, Marc Silverstein **Distributor** Warner Bros **Running time** 110 mins



"Leave some SunnyD for me!"



THE FINEST HOURS

★★★☆☆ Out now

A DARING 1952 ATTEMPT TO SAVE 33 sailors on a stricken oil tanker forms the basis of this sturdy, old-school actioner, whose Coast Guard heroics recall *The Guardian* just as much as its CG tempest stirs memories of *The Perfect Storm*. Chris Pine and Casey Affleck are wet blanket and cold fish respectively as the callow coxswain and mumbling engineer who must man up and grow a pair if they are to keep their separate crews alive. The problems lie on shore, where Holliday Grainger pines for Pine with an emotional blankness that makes even that tanker look animated. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 117 mins



MARGUERITE

★★★★☆ Out 18 March

TONE-DEAF OPERA LOVER FLORENCE Foster Jenkins – subject of an upcoming biopic starring Meryl Streep – is also the inspiration for this lavish French period piece about a rich French aristo labouring under a pathetic self-delusion: that she has the voice of an angel, rather than that of a strangled cat. Xavier Giannoli's comedy has beaucoup de fun at the expense of its heroine (Catherine Frot), whose misplaced faith in her non-abilities is indulged by her cheating hubby (André Marcon), cynical butler (Denis Mpunga) and a society steeped in sniggering hypocrisy. By the end, though, she'll have you crying like *Pagliacci*. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 129 mins



GOODNIGHT MOMMY

★★★★☆ Out now

AN ISOLATED HOUSE IN THE AUSTRIAN countryside: nine-year-old twin boys await the return of their mother from hospital after a major operation. But when she arrives, face bandaged, she's nothing like the parent they knew. Harsh and remote, she scares them until they suspect she's not their mother at all – and then they turn on her... With minimal resources, writer/directors Severin Fiala and Veronika Franz have crafted an insidious chiller, drawing measured performances from real-life twins Lukas and Elias Schwarz. So a last-minute twist lifted from Robert Mulligan's *The Other* can easily be forgiven. **Philip Kemp**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 96 mins



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

★★★☆☆ Out now

MADE – FOR BUTTONS MOST LIKELY – in vibrant Mumbai, Johannes Roberts' (*Storage 24*) chiller looks a million dollars, maybe more. Combining the canny cine-tourism of the Ford brothers' *The Dead* films with the plot of *Wake Wood*, it riffs on the classic *The Monkey's Paw* template to show Sarah Wayne Callies and Jeremy Sisto falling foul of local folklore as they attempt to communicate with their lost son. The script lacks the precision of Roberts' (underrated) slasher *F*, and the acting's a little bumpy in places, but imaginative FX, excellent use of location and enough genuine (if, often, jump) scares compensate. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 96 mins



He woke up and wondered where the rest of his bedroom had gone.

The Club

★★★★★ Out 25 March

Bleak house...

IF PABLO LARRAÍN'S PIERCING political satire *No* (2012) played like a Chilean double of Ben Affleck's *Argo* in its keen riff on recent history, his latest resembles a darker sibling to *Spotlight*. A journalistic angle steadied Tom McCarthy's take on child abuse in the Catholic church. Yet Larraìn's terrifically tense, boldly mordant chamber piece does something more unsettling: he ventures inside both a penitential house and its occupants' minds, grappling with areas murkier than the fog choking its coastal setting.

Keeping histrionics at bay, Larraín – refining the concision of his Pinochet-era fables *Post Mortem* (2010) and *Tony Manero* (2008) – lays out his themes with vice-tight assurance. Symbolically loaded shots of daily routines and roads to nowhere imply cycles of irresolution as we meet four disgraced priests living under the rules of Sister Mónica (Antonia Zegers); they keep themselves low-key, though proof of repentance is scarce. But routine splinters when a fifth priest arrives, recognised by fisherman Sandokan (Roberto Farías), a heartbreakingly troubled and vocal victim of the newcomer's crimes. When violence erupts, Marcelo Alonso's Father García visits the house to contain the crisis: perhaps even to shut it down.

A series of two-handed interrogations follows, transformed under Larraín's watch from talking-heads torpor into electric bouts of chafing loyalties – to church, faith, the self. His flair for directing actors stokes full-bodied performances from regular collaborator Alfredo Castro as a self-preserved priest and Zegers, who spikes Mónica with icy poise. The dialogue is charged, the cinematography expressive: DoP Sergio Armstrong makes claustrophobic work of the widescreen frame.

Tension mounts for a grimly knuckle-gnawing climactic sequence involving dogs, where a core theme of judgement deferred is steered to ambiguous ends. With forensic focus and black humour, Larraín guides us towards a fearless examination of unresolved tensions between suffering, guilt and the closed ranks of institutional impunity. **Kevin Harley**

THE VERDICT With stinging wit, Larraín shines a spotlight on crime and non-punishment in the Catholic church and emerges with a tale free from hysteria yet fraught with human complexity.

› **Certificate** 18 **Director** Pablo Larraìn **Starring** Alfredo Castro, Roberto Farías, Antonia Zegers, Jaime Vadell **Screenplay** Guillermo Calderón, Daniel Villalobos, Pablo Larraìn **Distributor** Network Releasing **Running time** 97 mins



BLACK MOUNTAIN POETS

★★★☆☆ Out 1 April

INEPT PETTY-CRIMINAL SISTERS Lisa (Alice Lowe) and Claire (Dolly Wells), escaping from a botched robbery attempt, hijack a car belonging to two sister poets heading for a bardic retreat in the Welsh hills. Arriving in the Black Mountains, the fugitive pair find themselves obliged to impersonate the poets and perform. Cue comedy of embarrassment and some seriously crap poetry. Jamie Adams' (*Benny & Jolene*) movie devotes rather too much time to routine flirtations and jealousies within the new-ageist group, and the ending turns soggy. But until then it passes the time divertingly enough. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 85 mins



WELCOME TO ME

★★★★☆ Out 25 March

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON $86 million? If you're an *Oprah* obsessive with borderline-personality disorder, you'd probably buy your own chat show – something Alice Klieg (Kristen Wiig) manages to do at a failing TV studio that is all too happy to take her money. Re-enacting painful scenes from her childhood, neutering dogs and sobbing loudly about masturbation, she delivers a televisual car crash that no one can stop watching. Veering suddenly and wildly between sharp comedy and sharper tragedy, Shira Piven's bold indie rests almost entirely on Wiig, who offers up a fearless performance. **Paul Bradshaw**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 88 mins



COURT

★★★☆☆ Out 25 March

IN MUMBAI, ELDERLY TEACHER and radical folk singer Narayan Kamble (Vira Sathidar) finds himself arrested on trumped-up charges of abetting suicide. Chaitanya Tamhane's debut feature takes well-aimed pot-shots at the creaking, hidebound Indian judicial system, where antiquated laws are still trotted out with reverence. (Not so unlike Britain, perhaps...) But the film also leaves the courtroom to paint a wider picture of Indian society, where prejudice and tradition hold sway. The deliberate pacing risks trying our patience, but it's an accurate reflection of a system in stasis. **Philip Kemp**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 116 mins



THE PEARL BUTTON

★★★★☆ Out 18 March

CHILEAN DOCUMENTARIAN PATRICIO Guzmán delivers a stunning companion piece to his 2010 film *Nostalgia For The Light*, continuing his exploration of the effects of Augusto Pinochet's ruthless dictatorship. Examining Chile's relationship with its coastline, Guzmán links poetic observations about the life-giving nature to the horrors of Pinochet's regime, including the dumping of bodies into the surrounding sea. The film doesn't flow as well as its major theme would suggest, but it does hint at a truly devastating conclusion: how needless those events were given Earth's insignificance in the ever-expanding cosmos. **Matt Looker**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 82 mins

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THE ONES BELOW

★★★★☆ Out 11 March

BEGINNING ON AN ALIEN-LOOKING ultrascan and unafraid to explore aspects of pregnancy not often shown on screen, writer/director David Farr's London-set chiller is both frank and fraught with parental anxiety. Clémence Poésy and Stephen Campbell Moore are the harried parents-to-be; Laura Birn and David Morrissey their too-perfect downstairs neighbours, also expecting. You don't need to be Nostradamus to see trouble brewing, but it's a quality effort that unsettles even as it gets silly, with Poésy's convincingly spooked performance holding things together when subtlety finally flees the party. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 86 mins



BATTLE MOUNTAIN: GRAEME OBREE'S STORY

★★★☆☆ Out 1 April

GRAEME OBREE, THE BIPOLAR SPEED cyclist whose attempts at record-breaking were dramatised in 2006 biopic *The Flying Scotsman*, tackles another challenge in David Street's doc: breaking the world human-powered speed record in a home-made two-wheeler partially constructed out of a saucepan. The jittery, garrulous Obree travels to Nevada to compete against well-financed teams with superior technology: a David-Goliath battle that keeps us invested, for all the film's circuitous longueurs and a score that seeks to steer our emotions rather than stir them. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 104 mins



IONA

★★★☆☆ Out 25 March

WITH NO EXPLANATIONS AND NOT many more words, the eponymous protagonist (Ruth Negga) and her 15-year-old son (Ben Gallagher) take the ferry back to the suffocating Scottish island where she grew up, burn their car, and move in with the adoptive father (Douglas Henshall) she left behind years before, sending shocked ripples through the tight-knit community. Scott Graham's (*Shell*) confident drama features a strong central performance and a believably bleak sense of place, but it's almost comically taciturn in places, its secrets unravelling slowly amid an atmosphere of quiet trauma. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 85 mins



I AM BELFAST

★★★★☆ Out 8 April

AFTER HIS TRIP INTO HIROSHIMA'S history for the BBC's *Atomic*, critic/filmmaker Mark Cousins comes home with this fluent and forceful quasi-doc dialogue with Belfast. Imagining the city as an ageing woman (played by Helena Bereen), Cousins engages place/person in exchanges about past and present, Titanic and Troubles, folklore and future hopes. His faux-poeticism can grate, but Cousins and DoP Chris Doyle's painterly images brim with grit and mystery, and darker material isn't dodged. Even when he lapses into whimsy, Cousins' approach summons a portrait of great colour, complexity and originality. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 84 mins

Boulevard

★★☆☆☆ Out 8 April Secrets and drives...

SOME FILMS CAN'T HELP BUT BE defined by external circumstances. As one of the late Robin Williams' final lead roles, this carries a resonance far beyond what is otherwise a by-rote tale of belatedly coming out. Williams plays Nolan, an apparently content bank employee and husband to Joy (Kathy Baker). But beyond the jovial dinner parties, the couple sleep in different rooms and barely co-exist. Faced with the prospect of his father dying and the chance of promotion at work, Nolan's bubble bursts and he defies a lifetime's repression by picking up street hustler Leo (Roberto Aguire) on the titular thoroughfare.

While it does Williams a disservice to ponder the psychological significance of playing a man burdened by inner demons, there's an undeniable finality to his choice of role here. This film reinforces the direction of travel in Williams' later career towards challenging dramatic roles. It's hard to imagine many stars – of his or any other generation – capable of displaying such self-effacing discomfort while still retaining our sympathies.

It's a shame, though, that nothing else matches Williams' work. Like a boulevard, this is arrow-straight in reaching its narrative destination, offering little of interest in its depiction of coming out. The focus on Nolan reduces the impact because other characters are so underwritten; Leo is little more than a cipher, while only Baker's steely performance stops Joy from being an afterthought.

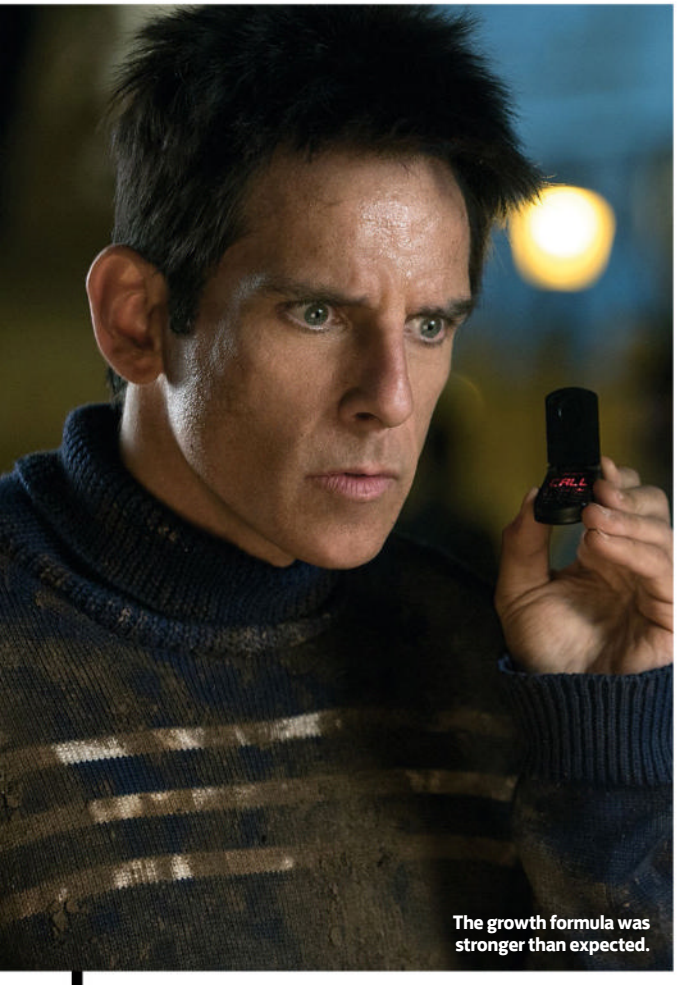
What lingers is the curiously despairing tone of Dito Montiel's (*A Guide To Recognising Your Saints*) direction. In a sub-genre that tends towards the celebratory (think of Christopher Plummer in *Beginners*) this is a sombre affair of measured camera movements and plaintive pauses, although *Better Call Saul*'s Bob Odenkirk – as Nolan's laissez-faire pal – provides much-needed humour. Given what we know now, the film has an eerily funereal aspect that makes the out-of-the-blue note of fragile hope in its ending doubly heartbreaking. **Simon Kinnear**

THE VERDICT A flimsy, contrived drama, sure – but as Robin Williams' sensitive final lead performance the story gains a weight it scarcely deserves and a resonance nobody ever wanted.

› **Certificate** TBC **Director** Dito Montiel **Starring** Robin Williams, Kathy Baker, Roberto Aguire, Giles Matthey, Eleonore Hendricks **Screenplay** Douglas Soesbe **Distributor** Kaleidoscope **Running time** 85 mins



The late Robin Williams gives his final dramatic perfomance.


The growth formula was stronger than expected.

Zoolander 2

★★★☆☆ Out now **Still(er) on trend?**

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER DEREK Zoolander drunk an Orange Mocha Frappuccino, gave himself a wedgie in a walk-off and stopped a Chinese throwing star with one look, Ben Stiller's really, really good-looking male model is back. Where has he been? In hiding, it seems, after his Center For Kids Who Can't Read Good collapsed, killing wife Matilda, injuring his model mate Hansel (Owen Wilson) and leading to Derek Jr. (Cyrus Arnold) being taken into care.

When fashion's new queen, Alexanya Atoz (Kristen Wiig), entices him to Rome for a catwalk extravaganza, Derek sees it as an opportunity to get his son back. There's a reunion with Hansel, but these two fashion fools soon realise the industry has moved on and is now run by incoherent hipsters like Alexanya's chief designer Don Atari (Kyle Mooney, hilarious). Trying to make amends with his offspring, Derek's left gazing in a puddle asking, "Who am I?"

There's more plot here than the original *Zoolander* (2001), much of it involving Valentina (Penélope Cruz), an agent for Interpol's Global Fashion Police, embroiling Derek and Hansel in the hunt for a killer who's gunning down pop stars. But, sadly, the script lacks the earlier film's novelty. Maybe it's a comment on the way the fashion industry recycles old ideas, but the same catchphrases, music cues and characters are dug out, often to lesser effect – notably when Wham!'s 'Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go' gets a second airing.

There are cameos aplenty – from Sting to Valentino to Benedict Cumberbatch – and Wiig has a ball, mispronouncing every line as she literally floats around in a costume that makes her look like a giant Quality Street. But the film only really gets going when Derek's nemesis Jacobim Mugatu (Will Ferrell) turns up. Ferrell is always at his best playing outlandish, and he steals every scene he's in, spouting magnificent gobbledegook ("I'm the mamma bejamba!"). A Mugatu spin-off? Now that's an idea...
James Mottram

THE VERDICT **More Blue Steel than Magnum, this is a perfectly serviceable sequel, but it lacks the original's sizzle. So hot right now? Well, more lukewarm.**

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Ben Stiller **Starring** Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, Will Ferrell, Kristen Wiig, Penélope Cruz **Screenplay** Ben Stiller, John Hamburg, Nicholas Stoller, Justin Theroux **Distributor** Paramount **Running time** 101mins



THE BOY

★☆☆☆☆ Out 18 March

THE WALKING DEAD'S LAUREN COHAN takes a leap from the small screen to the lower rung of Hollywood horror with this dopey monster-doll creeper from *The Devil Inside* director William Brent Bell. Cohan plays an American nanny taking on a job for an elderly English couple. She's as bemused as the viewer when she finds out the child is actually a life-sized porcelain doll; even more so when it starts laughing and chasing her round the house. Some decent jump scares here and there, but the best part of the whole ordeal is watching Cohan keep an admirably straight face through this nonsense. **Ken McIntyre**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 97 mins



E NESBIT'S THE RAILWAY CHILDREN

★★★☆☆ Out 28 March

AUDIENCES HAVE BEEN GOING LOCO for this stage version of E. Nesbit's novel ever since it first rolled into the National Railway Museum in York in 2008. Whether cinemagoers will be as entranced by this one-night-only screening is less certain, given its main(line) attraction – a real, chuffing, vintage choo-choo – can't hope to have the same thrilling impact on the screen as it does up close and personal. Still, the nostalgic pleasures of this portrait of three children (disconcertingly played here by adult actors) come across well enough in a piece whose moving parts are both literal and figurative. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** U **Running time** 109 mins



RAN

★★★★★ Out 1 April

KUROSAWA'S THIRD SHAKESPEARE adaptation and his last great film, 1985's *Ran* is his epic version of *King Lear*, transposed to strife-torn 16th-Century Japan. Ageing warlord Hidetora (Tatsuya Nakadai) decides to abdicate and divide his realm between his three sons; as in the original, it's a disastrous move. Ran means 'chaos', and that's what Kurosawa unleashes – but meticulously orchestrated chaos, as armies wheel and clash, and death and desolation overwhelm the senses. At the time, this was the most expensive Japanese production ever – and it magnificently looks it in this 4K restoration. **Philip Kemp**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 156 mins



MERU

★★★☆☆ Out now

IT'S TEMPTING, WITH DOCUMENTARIES as rare as this, by husband and wife Jimmy Chin and Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, to review the tale rather than the telling. And the tale here is incredible, following Chin and fellow climbers Conrad Anker and Renan Ozturk's thwarted attempts to conquer Meru, a 20,000ft-high Himalayan peak. The execution, sadly, is less than incredible, using the American TV tic of telling not showing or, worse, both at once. Shame, because the team's dedication is extraordinary, and their footage contains a fascinating account of how driven men can reach the clouds, and why they probably shouldn't. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 90 mins

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Box office charts 25.01.16 – 21.02.16



DEADPOOL
Never mind fourth wall breaking; this one's gone through the roof, smashing multiple records. He's now the Merc with a Merc, a Jag, a Bentley, private Helicarrier, spare private Helicarrier...



DAD'S ARMY
Despite its comedic, nostalgic glow, this Home Guard story stirs up some genuine anxieties. Are they going to do *Terry And June* next? *Are You Being Served? Mind Your Language*?



ZOOLANDER 2
If the middling results for this and the similarly belated *Dumb And Dumber To* teach us anything, it's that there's never been a better time not to make a *Dude, Where's My Car?* sequel.

UK TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Deadpool ★★★★	£25.9m	£25.9m	2
2	Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip ★★★	£13.1m	£13.1m	2
3	The Revenant ★★★★★	£9m	£21m	6
4	Goosebumps ★★★★	£7.6m	£7.6m	3
5	Dad's Army ★★★	£6.9m	£6.9m	3
6	The Good Dinosaur ★★★★	£6.7m	£14.8m	13
7	Dirty Grandpa ★★	£5.2m	£5.2m	4
8	Spotlight ★★★★	£4.4m	£4.4m	4
9	The Big Short ★★★★	£3.9m	£5.2m	5
10	Ride Along 2 ★★	£3.7m	£5.8m	5

US TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Deadpool ★★★★	$235.4m	$235.4m	2
2	Kung Fu Panda 3 ★★★★	$117.1m	$117.1m	4
3	The Revenant ★★★★★	$45.9m	$165.1m	9
4	Star Wars: The Force Awakens ★★★★★	$42.5m	$921.6m	10
5	How To Be Single ★★★	$31.8m	$31.8m	2
6	Ride Along 2 ★★	$27.9m	$86.5m	6
7	Hail, Caesar! ★★★★	$26.3m	$26.3m	3
8	The Finest Hours ★★★	$25.5m	$25.5m	4
9	Zoolander 2 ★★★	$23.7m	$23.7m	2
10	Dirty Grandpa ★★	$23.5m	$34.6m	5



DIRTY GRANDPA
Come on, Hollywood – there's *got* to be potential for a crossover sequel with Jackass' *Bad Grandpa*. It's just a shame the X-Men have already nabbed the title *Apocalypse*.



KUNG FU PANDA 3
With this and *Goosebumps*, Jack Black is *back*. Be sure to catch *Bad Bromance* on DVD, even if the name change does makes it sound like an honest title for *The Wedding Ringer*.



HOW TO BE SINGLE
Speaking of alternative titles, you can't help thinking how many other movies this one would also be an excellent fit for: *Kramer Vs. Kramer*, *I Am Legend*, *Taxi Driver*, *Amour*...

Still out, still good...

Our pick of the movies out now



HAIL, CAESAR! ★★★★
"This is undiluted, absolute Coen brothers, spring-loaded with cinematic chicanery and showing the arch tricksters at their most playful. The bros' blend of humour – absurdist, deadpan, often just plain silly – is everywhere you look."



TRIPLE 9 ★★★★
"The dirty-cop thriller just got dirtier... If you like bleak 'n' brutal thrillers like *The French Connection*, *Se7en* and *Animal Kingdom*, this is the movie for you... Casey Affleck is the standout in a uniformly strong ensemble."



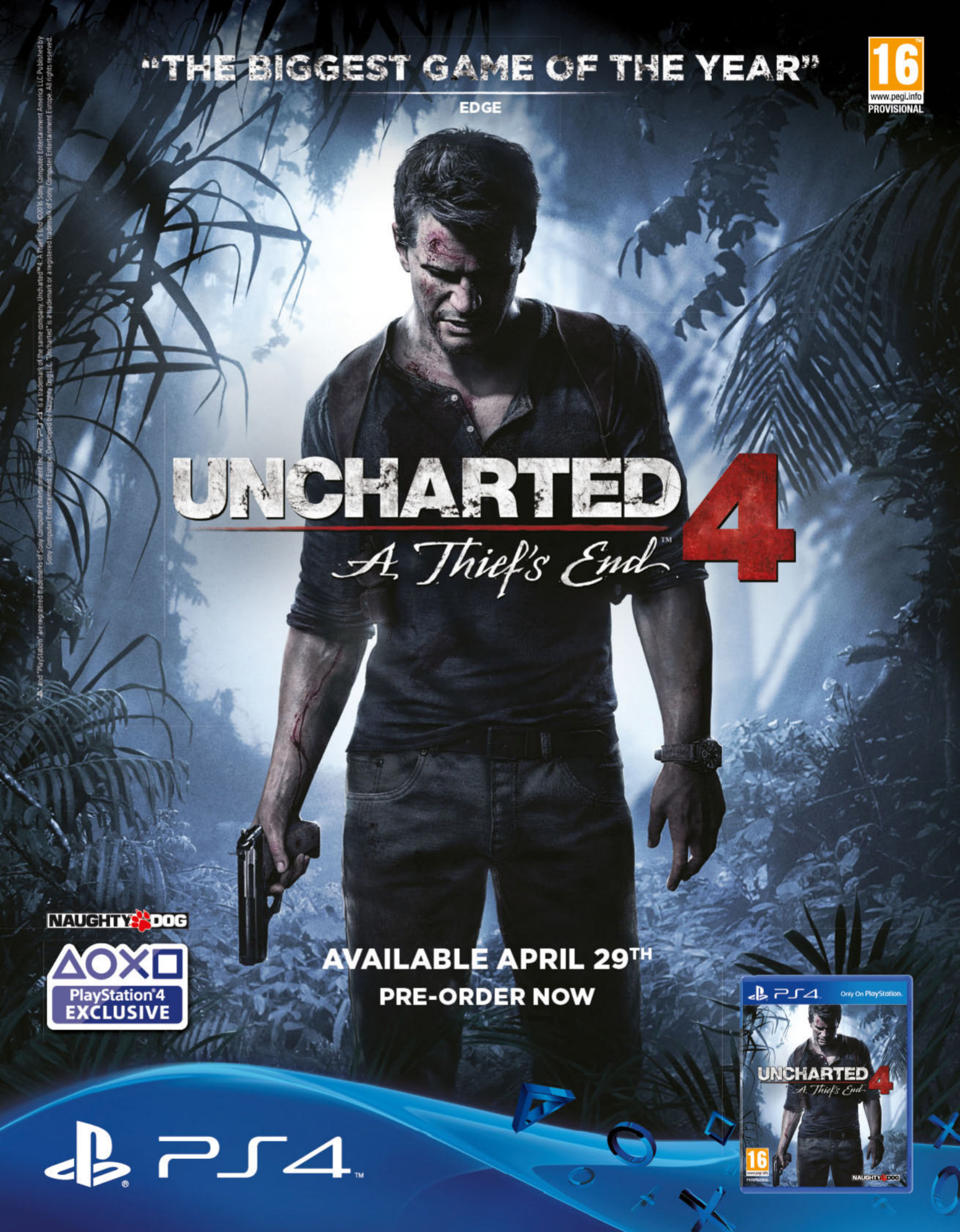
BONE TOMAHAWK ★★★★
"Writer/director S. Craig Zahler's debut has several aces up its sleeve. His dialogue takes us effortlessly back to the Old West and there's a great cast relishing their rounded characters... The best campfire movie for some time."



Coming soon...

The big hitters on the cards for next issue...

Seems like only last month we were previewing a battle royale betwixt comic-book titans who've clearly run out of supervillains to punch. *Captain America: Civil War* (29 April) will bring to a head the Cap/Iron Man enmity that's been brewing since the latter called the former a "Capsicle". Is Tony's Stark worse than his bite? Will Steve leave his ferrous foe feeling, um, Rogered? And why is almost every Avenger in this film bar Thor? Answer: because he's in *The Huntsman: Winter's War* (8 April), AKA the Snow White movie without Snow White. *Frozen*'s sisterly friction seems a major influence on this prequel-sequel; don't be surprised if Nick Frost turns into Olaf. Speaking of Disney, it's nearly time to open *The Jungle Book* (15 April). Jon Favreau's film is set to be a live-action bonanza, with real CGI made by real computers. And if you want to know what the fudge *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* (22 April) is about, hit p98.


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10 Coolest movies coming your way

AND WHEN TO FIND THEM

From beasts and comic-book badasses to partying teens, an all-singing, all-dancing Ryan Gosling and lady ghoul-wranglers. Bring it...

WORDS Sam Ashurst, Sarah Dobbs, Jordan Farley, Jamie Graham, Simon Kinnear, Matt Maytum and James Mottram



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Spirited away

The Potter prequel tells of witches, wizards and wondrous creatures in '20s New York. Total Film gets producer David Heyman to spill secrets... WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM**

DIRECTOR David Yates
STARRING Eddie Redmayne, Ezra Miller, Colin Farrell, Samantha Morton
ETA 18 November

***Fantastic Beasts* is very much in the spirit of the *Potter* books but it's not filled with young children and their issues," says über-producer David Heyman, pondering if this is a more adult take on the *Harry Potter* universe. "I wouldn't say it's 'dark' but, as with all of Jo [*Rowling*]'s work, it's not soft. There is material in all of the books that has a truth about life. Here, there's darkness within. But there are also these creatures, and an awful lot of humour and heart – which I think will appeal to young and old alike."**

When the bell rang on the *Potter* franchise in 2011, it was never going to be the end – $7.7bn at the worldwide box office over eight movies made sure of that, plus the fanbase was too extensive and too rabid to not demand more. The answer presented itself in the form of *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*, a slim volume published in 2001, purporting to be Harry's textbook from first novel *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*.

It was written by J.K. Rowling under the pseudonym of Newt Scamander, a magizoologist who details within the 85 magical species that he's collected over five continents. In his foreword, Hogwarts' esteemed headmaster Albus Dumbledore writes 'Draco dormiens nunquam titillandus' or 'Never tickle a sleeping dragon' – but that's exactly what Warner Bros, Rowling and Heyman chose to do, expanding the textbook into a $225m prequel set in the secret community of witches and wizards in 1920s New York.

"Jo was on set and has been an incredible support to us," says Heyman when asked just how involved Rowling, who wrote the screenplay (her first), has been. "We'd run concepts by her, she'd give her thoughts and we'd adjust accordingly. She certainly was aware of all the lead casting choices before we finalised them."

Said cast includes Colin Farrell, Ezra Miller, Jon Voight, Samantha Morton, Katherine Waterston, Ron Perlman and Gemma Chan, while main man Newt is played by an actor who knows just where to find an Academy Award, Eddie Redmayne. It's smart casting, though Heyman insists it was a no-brainer.

"Newt is someone who communicates better with his creatures than he does with people," he smiles. "He's a Brit who finds himself in the US, and the American magical universe is different to the British one. Eddie was our first choice. He's very good at playing characters that are out of step, as it were, and bringing to them a real heart and compassion. He has a desire to bring truth to every moment. He's very charming and appealing to men and women alike. And he's a timeless actor, so he fits perfectly into 1920s New York."

Fantastic Beasts, says Heyman, will explore various aspects of the city – the Muggle world as well as the magical – and any gallivanting across the other four continents to capture outlandish specimens will be saved for sequels. But there will be beasts, and plenty of them, with several creatures escaping from Newt's briefcase. No, they're not pint-sized critters that can pass unnoticed among the skyscrapers – it is, of course, a *magic* suitcase...

"The beasts are going to be all shapes and sizes!" laughs Heyman. "They're all going to be digital. These are extraordinary creatures. I don't know how they could do this practically – as wonderful as animatronics are, you can't get the detailed movement or flexibility that you can with the digital universe. We have explored animals in the real world. We've done a lot of research on movement and look because we want to make our creatures grounded. They should seem like they really could exist, so they're not just pure fantasy."

Heyman uses words like "truth" and "reality" throughout our chat, and is adamant that all movies, and especially fantasy movies, must be relatable if they're to spirit viewers away. But just how long is this journey going to be? A trilogy is locked, with *Fantastic Beasts 2* and *3* scheduled for 2018 and 2020, but might this spin-off series rival the *Potter* franchise in its number of instalments?

Heyman escapes giving a firm answer with the nimbleness of a beast escaping Newt's briefcase. "Well, at the moment we're concerned with making the first one as good as possible. In a way, that was the approach with each of the *Potter*s – you try and make each film as good as it can be. And if it's as good as we want it to be, then the rest will follow." One thing's for sure: the rabid fanbase will follow also. >>



Beasts on the street: Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) and Porpentina Goldstein (Katherine Waterston) film a scene.



Wizarding world

Fantastic Beasts isn't the first time the Harry Potter universe has branched out. Total Film delves into the extended wizarding world... WORDS **SARAH DOBBS**

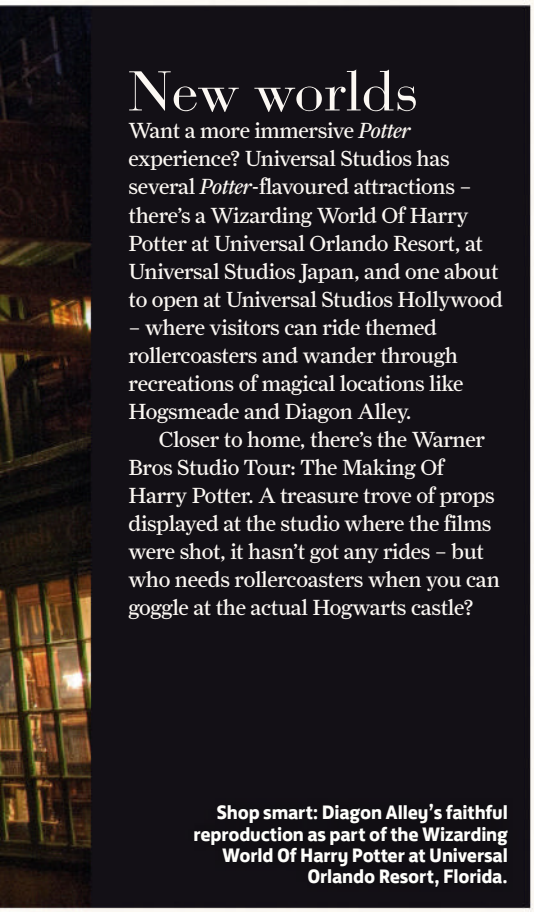
Seven novels and eight movies is more than some fandoms ever get. But even the most rabid Potterphiles can only re-read *Chamber Of Secrets* so many times before they start craving something new. And while *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* is the biggest helping of new *Potter* goodness served up since 2011's *Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, there have been plenty of other opportunities for fans to feed their obsession over the years. Need to catch up? Here's the lowdown...



More Potter? Pottermore

The first stop for any Potterhead worth their salt is Pottermore (www.pottermore.com). Originally launched in 2011 as a kid-friendly intro to the books, it got a major makeover last year, transmogrifying into a dizzyingly extensive resource aimed at superfans. Gone are the mini-games and community tournaments; in their place are essays, listicles and exclusive extra content by J.K. Rowling. Ever wondered why Godric Gryffindor needed a sword, or which House the sorting hat would put you into? Pottermore's got the answers.

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New worlds

Want a more immersive *Potter* experience? Universal Studios has several *Potter*-flavoured attractions – there's a Wizarding World Of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort, at Universal Studios Japan, and one about to open at Universal Studios Hollywood – where visitors can ride themed rollercoasters and wander through recreations of magical locations like Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley.

Closer to home, there's the Warner Bros Studio Tour: The Making Of Harry Potter. A treasure trove of props displayed at the studio where the films were shot, it hasn't got any rides – but who needs rollercoasters when you can goggle at the actual Hogwarts castle?

Shop smart: Diagon Alley's faithful reproduction as part of the Wizarding World Of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort, Florida.



Playing Potter

Perhaps inevitably, there's a whole series of *Harry Potter* tie-in videogames. The first, *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*, was released alongside the original film, and the rest of the franchise followed in turn. Each game faithfully follows the plot of the movie it's named after, but that's about the best that can be said for them.

More fun are the *LEGO Harry Potter*s, *Years 1-4* and *Years 5-7*. They're closer to highlight reels than slavish recreations of the films, and better for it. Plus, when rendered in LEGO, even Voldemort is kind of adorable.



Harry Potter And The Middle-Aged Sequel



The most exciting addition to the *Potter* canon was announced last summer, when Rowling revealed she'd created a stage play with writer Jack Thorne. Opening in July, *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* is set 19 years after *Deathly Hallows*, and will see a grown-up Harry struggling with a job at the Ministry of Magic while bringing up three kids.

Performances are sold out until well into 2017, but if you can't wait that long, you can buy a copy of the script from 31 July. Which is probably what Daniel Radcliffe is gonna have to do. Despite being keen to see the play, he's not sure he'll be able to. "It would be a mental thing to try and see it with lots of very excited *Harry Potter* fans," he said, "But I would like to know what happens."

Reading for extra credit

Yet more Potter trivia can be found in J.K. Rowling's companion books, *Quidditch Through The Ages* and *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*. Published in 2001 for Comic Relief, they're packed with background info on the people, creatures and sports teams of the wizarding world. (Despite the title, *Fantastic Beasts* the movie came later – the book is all reference, no plot).

Another Muggle version of a magical book appeared in 2008, when Rowling wrote *The Tales Of Beedle The Bard*. "Writing it has been the most wonderful way to say goodbye to a world I loved and lived in for 17 years," she said at the time, apparently not realising she'd never be allowed to leave that world behind.





Voice of God

The final word on all things *Potter* comes from Rowling herself – though there's rarely anything 'final' about it. A prolific tweeter, she can't seem to resist dropping extra snippets of info onto her @jk_rowling Twitter account. Snippets like Moaning Myrtle's full name, what happened to Fluffy – and that we've all been pronouncing "Voldemort" incorrectly (the 't' is silent, apparently).

Rowling might've thought she was done with the Potterverse in 2008, but with two new releases this year, fans can rest assured it's not over yet. TF

GETTY



Super bad

The ruinous reprobates of the DC universe are comic-book cinema's real heroes.

WORDS **JORDAN FARLEY**

DIRECTOR David Ayer
STARRING Margot Robbie, Jared Leto, Will Smith, Cara Delevingne
ETA 5 August

It's not often that a studio has reason to be happy with a rival's runaway success, but you can bet that *Suicide Squad* studio Warner Bros and its DC division are doing the dance of joy after *Deadpool*'s game-changing demolition at the box office. Anti-hero(es)? Check. Irreverent insanity? Check. R-rated? Well, not yet, but don't be surprised if potty-mouthed crisis talks are currently underway in the bowels of DC HQ.

Not that there weren't plenty of reasons to be optimistic about *Suicide Squad* before the Merc With A Mouth made adult-oriented comic-book movies a lucrative proposition again. David Ayer's nutjob team-up movie is superhero cinema's edgy outsider precisely because it acknowledges a truth most are afraid to admit – bad guys are vastly more interesting than their goody two-shoes counterparts, as long as they're not underwritten to the point of irrelevance (see every Marvel movie villain, bar Loki).

"In your normal comic-book movie you have the good guy, the hero, and there's a checklist and you can reverse engineer their actions from any given situation because they're going to do the right thing," *Suicide Squad*'s writer/director David Ayer tells *Total Film*. "These are bad guys, so they have a lot more options open to them in any given situation. They're capable of anything, and that's the fun of this."

Batman V Superman may boast the dual might of the Dark Knight and the Last Son Of Krypton, but *Suicide Squad* has an even more enticing twosome at its core – Jared Leto's clown prince of crime, the Joker, and Margot Robbie's clinically insane former psychiatrist Harley Quinn. Let's not kid around: the phenomenally popular lovebirds aren't just the aces up *Suicide Squad*'s sleeve, they're the sleeve, torso, trousers and shoes too.

It's Leto who is grabbing all the hype-building headlines – staying in character as the Joker for the duration of the shoot, sending live rats and dead pigs to his co-stars and putting the heebie-jeebies up his director ("The hairs stand up on the back of your neck"), but according to Ayer, even this off-the-charts mythologising doesn't do Leto's performance justice. "What Jared has done is absolutely incredible," Ayer explains. "When he steps onto the set the world stops. Everything stops. What he's done is so powerful, so menacing, so palpable, you can feel him. The crew stops working and just watches him. I have to get everybody going again because he's so fascinating."

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Bad guys: (left) Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie); (above) Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) with director David Ayer.



Motley crew: (right) Enchantress (Cara Delevingne); (below) Deadshot (Will Smith) and Rick Flag (Joel Kinnaman).



In spite of all this, it's Harley who's poised to snatch *Suicide Squad* from under the ace of knaves' nose. The bonkers, bat-wielding Brooklynite's big-screen debut is long overdue, the character proving a fan favourite since her inception in the '90s Batman animated series. "Harley Quinn" was even the most-Googled Halloween costume of 2015, beating out "Star Wars", "Pirate" and, yes, "Batman". And if the Quinn-centric first trailer is anything to go by, Robbie looks to be the most inspired piece of comic-book movie casting since Downey Jr.'s Tony Stark.

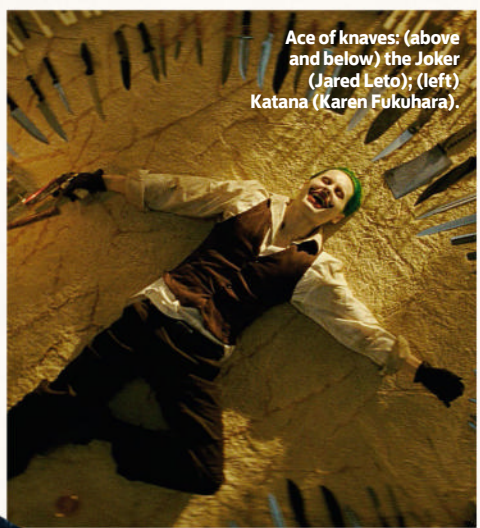
But two motley psychopaths does not a Squad make. There's also the small matter of Will Smith's crack marksman Deadshot, bendy-stick-flinging antipodean Captain Boomerang (Jai Courtney), reptilian cannibal Killer Croc (Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje), firestarter El Diablo (Jay Hernandez), military man Rick Flag (Joel Kinnaman), ancient witch Enchantress (Cara Delevingne), devil in a blue dress Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) and, well, you get the idea, it's an incredible cast. The appeal is immediately obvious: instead of taking a well-trodden dark and gritty path, *Suicide Squad* is embracing the unfiltered *fun* of the comics. And if you think the leaked Bat-cameo means there aren't any surprises in store, think again.

"What's interesting to me is how there's been a lot of perceptions of what this film is because we have been exposed more than other movies," Ayer confides. "What people think this movie is is not what it is. There's *so* much more to come."

>>







Ace of knaves: (above and below) the Joker (Jared Leto); (left) Katana (Karen Fukuhara).



Table talk: Dr Harleen Quinzell (Margot Robbie) counsels Joker (Jared Leto).

Bad romance

Selected highlights from Joker and Harley Quinn's gorgeously chequered past... WORDS **SAM ASHURST**

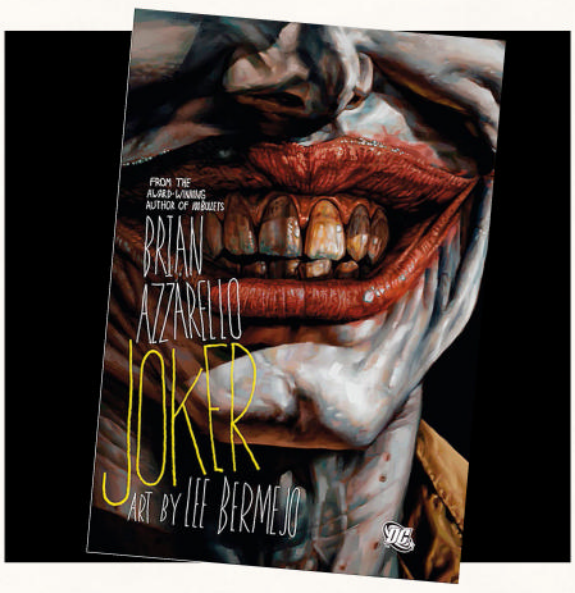
Mad Love

Harley Quinn's debut came as a Joker henchwoman in *Batman: The Animated Series* episode 'Joker's Favor' (first aired in 1992). But the relationship really took off in 1999 during 'Mad Love' (in *The New Batman Adventures*), structured around Harley describing how she met her man. It contains everything we consider canon about the couple – their S&M-style connection, Harley's pet names for her 'Puddin' and Joker's occasionally disdainful treatment. Mistah J might be dismissive, but Quinn's the most successful character to leap into the comics from a cartoon spin-off. Possibly because it's easy to identify with her adoration for someone who's wrong – but so right – for her. *Fifty Shades Of Green*, anyone?



Joker

The couple are remixed in Brian Azzarello's successful 2008 graphic novel, *Joker*. Here, the clown prince of crime's a noir gangster, with Killer Croc his hired muscle and Harley a stripper with a heart of cold who dances in his bar. With Joker's protagonist, Johnny Frost, appearing in *Suicide Squad*, and with a brief trailer glimpse of Margot Robbie's Quinn dancing in a bar that could very easily belong to her beloved, expect *Joker*'s influence to be felt in David Ayer's film. Don't, however, expect Leto's J to be as submissive to Robbie's H as he is in Azzarello's graphic novel – that was a significant change to their dynamic that will likely be ignored in *Suicide Squad*.



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Suicide Squad Comic Origin

In 2011, *Suicide Squad*'s rebooted New 52 comic retooled Quinn's beginnings, transforming her into a more direct Joker allegory. The couple still meet when Dr Harleen Quinzel provides psychiatric treatment for Joker in Arkham, and he still manipulates her into falling in love with him. Except here, Joker goes one jump further, taking Harley to Ace Chemicals and dumping her into the same liquid that made him so pretty. Sharing similarly bleached skin and psychotic tendencies, *Suicide Squad*'s Joker and Harley were transformed into one of those couples who look so good together it's sickening. Trailers for Ayer's movie confirm this will be their cinematic meet-cute.



Harley Quinn Smith

Leto isn't the only Joker giving gifts. Funnyman/filmmaker Kevin Smith's such a fan of Harley that he named his daughter Harley Quinn Smith. The writer/director recently presented an official TV celebration of the DC Extended Universe, and took home one of Harley's baseball bats from Ayer's movie as part-payment. Gifting the bat to his daughter, she posted her reaction on Instagram: "My dad gave me Harley Quinn's bat from *Suicide Squad* with a certificate of authenticity. I'm not joking when I say I cried for an hour," she said.

INSTAGRAM.COM/HARLEYQUINNNN_



Rat Rat

Fans might complain about Jared's Joker's ink, but they shouldn't judge a book by its cover. He might not look like your grandparents' Joker, but Leto is going full method in his mission to bring Mr J and Harley's relationship faithfully to the screen. Just like Joker would, Leto sent Robbie a live rat as a surprise gift. And Margot's just as dedicated, keeping the animal as a pet. "If Harley got something from Joker, she'd probably cherish it," she said. Named Rat Rat by Robbie, the beast is currently staying with Guillermo del Toro, because of course it is.



Tango With Evil

This 2003 Alex Ross portrait captures the essence of the killer couple's relationship, partly explaining why die-hard fans proclaim, in rambling tumblr posts, their desire to have a love like Joker and Harley's – somewhat missing the point that it's actually an abusive relationship between two raging psychotics. Quinn, in costume, drapes herself adoringly over a dapper Joker wearing a black tux, and it looks like the purest connection in comic-art. Well, if you ignore the controlling hand Joker has on Harley's wrist. Hugely popular and constantly homaged, Ross updated the image in 2015 to include Batman cutting in.

Batman: Arkham Asylum

Harley and Joker both appear in Rocksteady Studios' massive video-game series, launched in 2009. In fact, it's a redesigned Quinn who sets the game's plot into motion by helping Joker escape from Arkham. She then went all out to impress her beloved, putting Batman through a series of ordeals and dealing out the sort of puns that made her boyfriend such a card. Due to the game's story structure, they're not actually together as much as we'd like, but when they do share the screen it's like the animated series dynamic rendered into pixels. In the sequel, *Arkham City*, their connection directly leads to a major plot twist. TF





LA story

Joel Silver takes Total Film on a tour of the '70s-styled Los Angeles haunts frequented by Russell Crowe and Ryan Gosling in The Nice Guys...

WORDS **MATT MAYTUM**

DIRECTOR Shane Black
STARRING Russell Crowe, Ryan Gosling, Kim Basinger, Matt Bomer
ETA 3 June

Power producer Joel Silver is familiar with the LA of 40 years ago, having uprooted from New Jersey to Hollywood in the '70s to start his career. He's reteaming with writer-director Shane Black (having previously collaborated on the likes of *Lethal Weapon*, *Predator* and *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*) for *The Nice Guys*, a private-eye thriller set within this sleazy milieu. Here, Silver gives *Total Film* a guide to shooting a sinful story in the City of Angels...

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Going downtown

"This is Frogtown. It's kind of a downtown neighbourhood in LA. We had a lot built [to replicate the '70s]. This house had to be burned. But it's a very '70s-looking LA neighbourhood. It was just great shooting there. I came to LA in the '70s, so I remember it. It really felt like I remembered it. It was g reat shooting in those locations. Change the cars, the clothes and the people, and we're there. I'm watching a new American show called *Vinyl*, which is [*set in*] '73. I don't remember it quite as outrageous as that, but I remember the '70s. How much I'm on set depends on the movie – this was a complicated picture and there were a lot of issues. I was on set in Atlanta and I was here [in LA]. It was a big action movie, but Shane's very specific with how he writes and how he wants it to be. I try to help him achieve what he wants. It was a good collaboration with all of us – Shane, Philippe Rousselot the director of photography, and Ryan [Gosling] and Russell [Crowe]."

Blue skies

"We ended up shooting in January and February in LA last year. Yes, we complain about a few rainstorms, but movies show up here because the weather is generally good, and it's usually a good place to work every day and make movies. Philippe, who shot the movie, did an incredible job capturing what the area looked like and the bright sunny days. It really conveys a feeling of the city. It conveys a feeling of the time. And the locations really specifically go to what we're trying to do, which is to tell this story of the seedy side of LA and the high-end side of LA. You see it all in front of us."





Fake frontage

"This is actually Atlanta, but it shows how well we [recreated LA]. We shot a lot in LA, in downtown LA. We only had about three weeks there, so we had to make every single location count. We had foliage that matched in Atlanta for what we wanted in LA. But the big vistas, the big wide shots that we shot, all of those are LA. The houses are in LA. We shot on the Sunset Strip in front of the Comedy Store. We made every single location match." >>

Hardcore history

"In front of City Hall, we shot the downtown demonstration scene. All those places, all those things are legitimate locations. We just had to find ways to do it so that the look was [as it was] then, and not let the [modern] world creep in. [Shane] wrote the script 11 years ago. I met Shane in '86, before he made *Lethal Weapon*. He was 22 years old; he's come out of UCLA. This is his life. He knew the town, he knew the city. I mean, *Lethal Weapon* is all LA. He wrote it for the valley. He wrote it for the Hollywood Hills. A lot of the elements that are in *The Nice Guys*, he wrote for *Lethal Weapon*. So he had a sense of the city; he envisioned it in a way that he remembered it. So we had to try to create those vistas and that look. I don't want it to feel like sets. I want it like we're there, like we went back there. It was harder to do 1977 than it was to do 1891 for *Sherlock Holmes*."



Night moves

"That's the party house. That was the magic of visual effects because the house is in Atlanta, but all of the backgrounds, all the vistas were put in later, and that was all visual effects. The idea is it's a noir movie. It's an LA noir movie. It's the way Shane saw the story and saw the characters. He set it in '77 LA, and wanted a time with no cell phones, and a different kind of life, and a different way of thinking and doing things. Maybe it's a simpler time, but it's also a more complicated time.

It's a vast cast [of characters]. It's a lot of people who are interacting on all different levels. But all these people came together in a really interesting way, and it's all kind of in this melting pot of Los Angeles – which it still is. It was that way then, it is that way now. It's a city that collects so many different people from so many different places. It always has been that way."



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Drive time

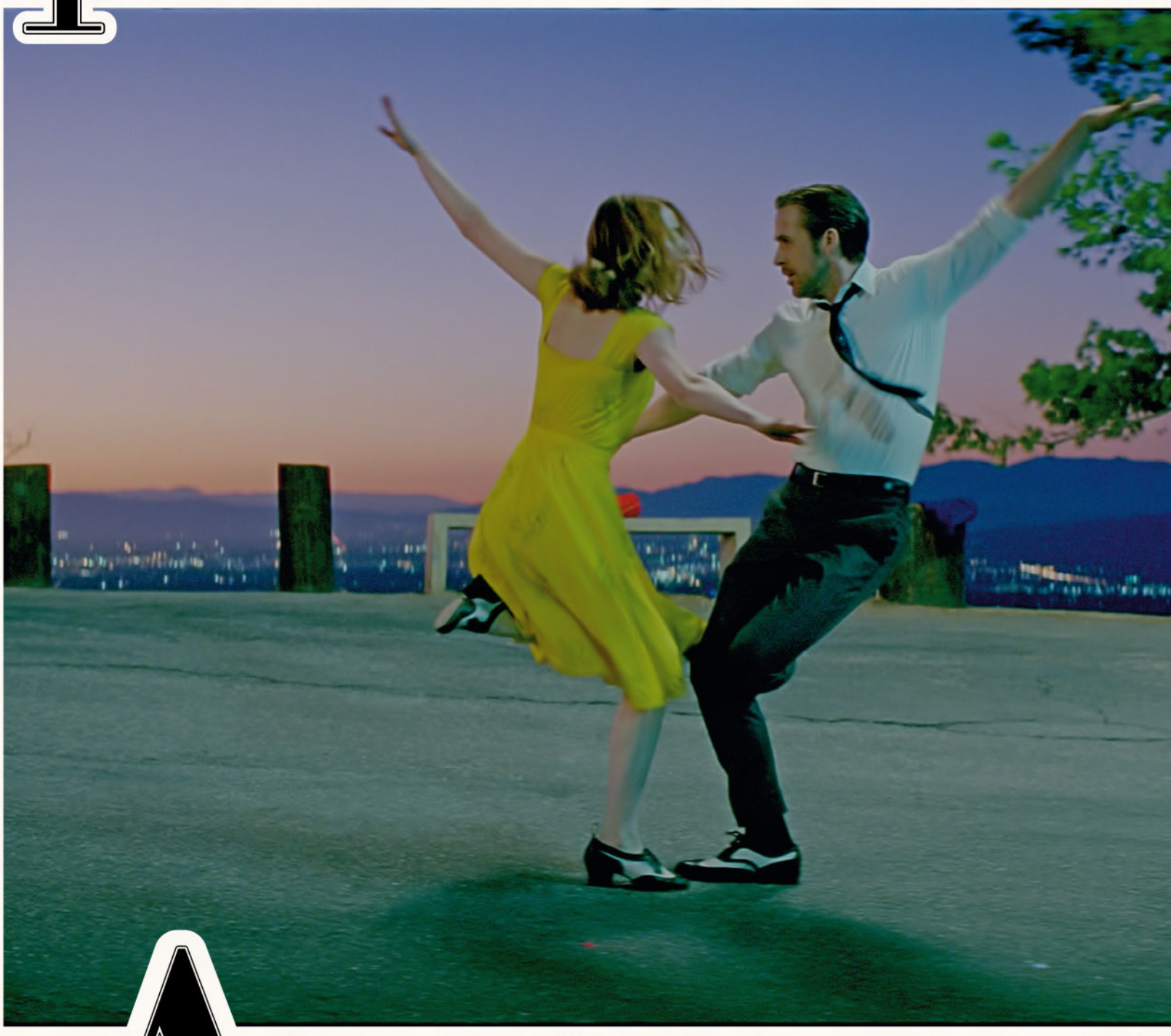
"That's a hotel in the movie. That was also in Atlanta, but you'll never know that when you see the movie – it looks just like it's LA. There's a lot [of digital work involved]. It's not like like doing visual effects movies, but there is a lot of digital replacement. You're putting set extensions or changing what you see through the magic of visual effects. Getting period cars like that, we just had specific ideas... Healy [*Russell Crowe*] drives an old Toronado, which is an Oldsmobile. March drives a Mercedes Convertible, which actually was the car in *The Hangover*. But in *The Hangover*, it was a brand new, silver, untouched Mercedes. In our movie, it was a brown, beat-to-shit – I mean, when we returned it, it was in perfect shape."





A view from the inside

A lot of the interiors were in Atlanta [*like inside March's (Ryan Gosling) apartment*]. Hollywood was built in the '70s. The higher up on the hill the houses are, the more view you have of the basin or of the San Fernando Valley. But most of Hollywood Hills had serious renovations so that they no longer look like they were made in the '70s. So we found locations involving hills and areas that are not in central LA. To make them look like those were the houses [*in that era*], all you've got to do is change the cars. When you put a little smog in and the houses are the way they need to be, it really feels like we're sitting in LA in '77." TF



All the ri

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Fancy footwork: Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone cut a rug in the LA hills.

ght moves

Damien Chazelle's Whiplash follow-up sees Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling dancing to a unique beat. WORDS **SIMON KINNEAR**

DIRECTOR Damien Chazelle
STARRING Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling, J.K. Simmons, Rosemarie DeWitt
ETA 15 July

The movie musical has been in rude health in recent years, thanks to robust adaptations of stage hits like *Les Misérables* and *Into The Woods* (not to mention *Frozen*'s 'Let It Go' ear-worming half the global population). Yet it's been a long time since anybody did a full-blown, toe-tapping extravaganza of the type that dominated Golden Age Hollywood.

Damien Chazelle might be the man to reinvigorate the genre. On paper, his previous film – about a jazz drummer locked in a cymbolic duel with his teacher – didn't sound much, but *Whiplash* was the little film that could, becoming a triple Oscar-winner and instant classic.

In *La La Land*, Chazelle makes a return to the world of performance, this time charting the on-off affair between musician Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) and aspiring actress Mia (Emma Stone). That relationship is recounted through – in Chazelle's words – "a full throttle song-and-dance romantic musical."

His reference points strike all the right chords: peak-period MGM classics like *Singin' In The Rain*, the work of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and Jacques Demy's colourful French fantasies such as *The Umbrellas Of Cherbourg*. Reuniting with *Whiplash* composer Justin Hurwitz, the two have fashioned an original score that Hurwitz promises contains "a bunch of songs and a couple of fantasy ballets... It's all lush, romantic, 90-piece orchestra."

Little is known about the story, except that Chazelle has long dreamt of bringing it to the screen. *La La Land* was planned as his second movie after 2009 debut *Guy And Madeline On A Park Bench*; it was only after developing writer's block that the writer/director channelled his anger into *Whiplash*, a project based on his experiences as a college drummer. "To put it simplistically, *Whiplash* is about the pain of making music; this is much more about the joy of making music."

Accordingly, he promises something more light-hearted this time around. "My experience as a jazz drummer was just constant dread, terror and anxiety... With *La La Land*, it's about love, and big dreams, and trying to navigate that kind of tenuous correlation between dreams and reality and what you have to do to your dreams to fit them into reality."

The title refers to Los Angeles, with Chazelle keen to "make a big love letter to the city and focus on that push and pull that all young artists experience... It's a city that's so filled with dreamers, most of whom won't make it. I think there's something poetic about that."

Alongside all those Golden Age musicals, a more unusual inspiration comes from the doc *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, which convinced Chazelle that "if treated the right way, LA can definitely hold its own as a romantic playground."

Originally rumoured to star *Whiplash*'s Miles Teller with Emma Watson, *La La Land* has instead become the third outing for Gosling and Stone, who established their crackling chemistry in *Crazy, Stupid, Love* before reuniting to lesser effect on *Gangster Squad*. They're joined by Chazelle's *Whiplash* muse J.K. Simmons and the latter's fellow 2015 Oscar winner John Legend (Best Original Song, for *Selma*'s theme track 'Glory'), here playing one of Gosling's fellow musicians.

Behind the camera, Chazelle confirms his standing as Hollywood's new golden boy by calling on an ace crew: David O. Russell's go-to guy Linus Sandgren as cinematographer, the Coens' regular costumier Mary Zophres and David Wasco, the man behind *Pulp Fiction*'s Jack Rabbit Slims, doing the production design.

"*Whiplash* was very much about the kinetic editing and images colliding against each other," Chazelle muses, "whereas this is about telling the story through camera and blocking. It's a style which is more suited to the musical but I think also more romantic." With Gosling and Stone on song, expect to swoon this summer. TF

WALL•Eek

Mythical beasts attack the Great Wall of China. Matt Damon fights back... WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM**



DIRECTOR Zhang Yimou
STARRING Matt Damon, Pedro Pascal, Andy Lau, Willem Dafoe
ETA 2017 TBC

What's the most spectacular action-fantasy coming our way? *Warcraft*, perhaps? *The Jungle Book*, maybe? *Tarzan*? How about *The Great Wall*, the $135m Chinese-American 3D extravaganza starring Matt Damon and directed by Zhang Yimou (*Hero*, *The House Of Flying Daggers*)? Little has been written about *The Great Wall*, to date – or, indeed, is even known, beyond that it was originally going to see Henry Cavill directed by Edward Zwick – but Damon assures *Total Film* it's unlike anything you've ever seen.

"It's a historical fantasy," he begins, phoning from the back seat of a car as he's whisked away from the Beijing set. It's 2 July 2015, the final day of the Beijing shoot before production decamps to the desert for a few weeks. Damon is clearly jazzed by the filming thus far, and happily spills the plot in one big gush... "It takes place around 15AD, and I play a mercenary who's gone to northern China to steal gunpowder. The movie starts with him being pursued by these nomad tribesman who are going to kill him. They are a group of Chinese soldiers whose job is to defend the wall because every 60 years these monsters out of Chinese mythology rise up and assault the wall, and try to break through to take over and kill everyone. Some of these soldiers live and die without ever seeing these beasts. They live to defend China. Pedro [*Pascal*] and I get captured by the army on the eve of an attack and prove ourselves worthy of helping in the defence of the wall."

It should come as no surprise that the company behind this behemoth (the most expensive film to ever shoot in China) is none other than Legendary Entertainment, the good folks responsible for bringing Kaiju back with Guillermo del Toro's robots vs monsters smackdown *Pacific Rim* and Gareth Edwards' heartfelt stompathon *Godzilla*. Given that Legendary is also working on rebooting the cinema's most famous ape in *Kong: Skull Island*, there's not a great deal they don't know about multiplex monsters.

It's a level of expertise that filters down through the entire movie. Joining Damon in the ensemble cast is Willem Dafoe and Hong Kong superstar Andy Lau, while *Bourne* scribbler Tony Gilroy has penned the script alongside Carlo Bernard and Doug Miro, creators of the Netflix hit *Narcos*. Lensing the insane action, meanwhile, is Stuart Dryburgh, the DoP who captured *The Piano*, *Bridget Jones's Diary* and Michael Mann's *Blackhat*. Looks like those monsters are going to be handsome-looking creatures.

But make no mistake about it, the biggest sell here is that the man responsible for some of the finest action sequences in modern cinema – to say nothing of his overseeing that crazily choreographed opening ceremony to the 2008 Beijing Olympics – has turned his attention to unleashing waves of giant beasts upon an elite army of men stationed along a wall that can be seen from space. How's that for an English-language debut?

"Oh man, it's amazing," laughs Damon. "Zhang Yimou doesn't speak a lick of English and I don't speak any Mandarin. But we both have made movies for our entire adult lives, so I always know where he's coming from. The guy's a genius." He pauses, still not quite believing the scale of it all. "It's basically a historical fantasy monster movie, but with Zhang Yimou directing! It's next-level insane. The shot-making is just so exciting. Having done this for 25 years... To watch him work is just awesome. He directed the Beijing Olympics. It's like the film version of the Beijing Olympics, but with monsters!" TF

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Bring on the wall: (l-r) Andy Lau, Matt Damon, Zhang Yimou, Jing Tian and Pedro Pascal in Beijing, July 2015.

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



'Bustin' out: (l-r) Melissa McCarthy, Kate McKinnon, Kristen Wiig and Leslie Jones are ghost-ready and (bottom right) Chris Hemsworth is manning the desk.









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Scare package

10 reasons why the ghoul-snaring reboot will make you feel good...

WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM**

DIRECTOR Paul Feig
STARRING Kristen Wiig, Melissa McCarthy, Leslie Jones, Kate McKinnon
ETA 15 July

1. Ladies' night

Never mind the idiotic haters claiming that women are scared of ghosts (and, er, mice) and wouldn't be able to work the tech hardware – the gender swap is an ace idea, sure to bring a fresh dynamic to the reboot. The 'tude of the released stills promises that these ladies will kick serious ass, human and ectoplasmic, and have a whole lotta fun doing it.

2. Sister act

Who you gonna call? There were rumours of Anne Hathaway, Gillian Anderson, Tina Fey and more strapping on proton packs, but the chosen quartet – Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones (all veterans of *SNL*, in keeping with the original cast) – are spot-on choices. Talking to *Total Film* last year, McCarthy promised "a really modern, current twist."

3. Direct hit

Paul Feig made one of the great comedies of this century in *Bridesmaids* (with, of course, McCarthy and Wiig), and has since confirmed that he's a ladies' man with *The Heat* and *Spy*. All three of these films demonstrate Feig's uncanny knack for blending mirth and muscle in a succession of memorable set-pieces, so who better to 'bust some moves?

4. Absolute beginners

The promise of a third *Ghostbusters* movie has been with us since the sequel made its bow in 1989, but Feig quickly made it clear that he didn't want to helm a part III set in an established universe with characters we know and a public that's used to seeing ghosts. Smart. We take him at his word that there will be no "lazy filmmaking" on show.

5. City girls

Feig has wisely elected to again set the action in New York (though a fair deal of the shooting took place in Boston), the director saying it would be a "sin" to relocate the action. Stills of vehicles Ecto-1 (the ambulance-hearse combo) and Ecto-2 (a motorbike with lasers duct-taped to the handlebars) also show he's down with the, ahem, spirit of the original.

6. Scary movie

Feig plans to put the horror into horror-comedy, assuring fans that *Ghostbusters* will make them giggle nervously. "How do you make comedy really scary?" he says, then answers his own question: "People in peril is one of the best forms of comedy." This is the guy who was studying *The Silence Of The Lambs* while considering making *The Heat 2*...

7. Phoning it in

We all remember Annie Potts as sharp-tongued receptionist Janine Melnitz in *Ghostbusters* and *Ghostbusters II*. Well, in keeping with the sex-change antics, Chris Hemsworth will now be handling all calls. The *Thor* actor showed us his comic chops (and a whole lot more) in his cameo in last year's *Vacation* reboot, so he'll undoubtedly be game for whatever the ladies throw at him.

8. Guess who's back?

Rick Moranis might have said no ("Why would I do just one day of shooting on something I did 30 years ago?") but most of the original cast members are back for cameos as new characters, including Dan Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson (after initially pooh-poohing the idea), Sigourney Weaver, the aforementioned Potts and, of course, Bill Murray. "I feel really good about it," he says.

9. Size does matter

There are another 154 million reasons to feel good about the reboot – with a budget north of $150m, there's no doubting Sony's commitment, and we can expect gigantic set-pieces oozing with state-of-the-art CGI. Of course, everyone loves the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man despite some dodgy optical compositing (he passes right through a church at one point), but now audiences expect more.

10. Dirty talk

Really, how can you not feel good about a movie that's being directed by a guy who gives as good as he gets on Twitter? Fed up with the haters, Feig snapped back. Our favourite? "You, sir, are the biggest ass of them all... You've been ranting at me and my cast for months with misogyny and insults. So go fuck yourself. Goodnight." TF



Big man on campus: a relaxed RIchard Linklater leads Temple Baker and Glenn Powell.







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College daze

How could Richard Linklater possibly follow up Boyhood? With a "spiritual sequel" to one of his most beloved movies, Dazed And Confused. Alright, alright, alright...

WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM**

DIRECTOR Richard Linklater
STARRING Blake Jenner, Zoey Deutch, Wyatt Russell, Tyler Hoechlin, Ryan Guzman
ETA 13 May

The teenagers in Richard Linklater's 1993 movie, like teenagers the world over, feel hemmed in, oppressed. They may have spent the entire afternoon and evening cruising hotrods, scoring beers and getting high, and are now drinking and making out at a keg party that will run to the light of dawn, but waiting at home are picket fences and manicured lawns, parents and rules. Just imagine the freedom that awaits when they graduate high school and hit college. Just imagine the shit they can get up to then. Just imagine Linklater's new movie, *Everybody Wants Some!!*.

"You know, I think I have to say that this is my "spiritual" sequel to *Dazed And Confused* because I don't think you can technically have a sequel without having the same actors and characters," Linklater laughs down the phone from his home in Austin, Texas. He has reason to be happy – everybody, it seems, does indeed want some of his latest venture; critics are raving, with *Rolling Stone* calling it "a beautiful, hilarious film... ridiculously fun and deceptively deep."

The 55-year-old director chuckles again, pointing out he couldn't do an *actual* sequel because all the *Dazed* actors are now in their late-30s and early-40s. "If you just imagine the young guys in *Dazed And Confused*, like Mitch [*Wiley Wiggins*], four years later going off to college; it's 1980, he's once again a freshman. In *Dazed*, he's a freshman at high school. Now, he's a freshman going to college. Imagine that. You leave all your old friends and town and family behind, and you're confronted with all the freedoms. *Dazed* was my high school party, this is my college party."

The key word there is "my", for just as Linklater poured his own high-school experiences into the freewheeling action of *Dazed And Confused*, accounting for the keen anthropological eye, so he ransacks his own college past at Sam Houston State University for *Everybody Wants Some!!*. He might have left early, in 1982, to work on an offshore oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico before becoming a figurehead of the burgeoning US indie scene in the late-'80s, but he still had two years' worth of material to cram into the three-and-a-half-day timeframe of his new film.

"It's not specifically autobiographical, but all of it... *much* of it really happened, put it like that!" he says. "To me, university is about freedom. *Dazed* was about getting away with as much as they could within some pretty strict circumstances. This, it's kind of the opposite. You're unleashed on the world as a seeming adult, even though you're only about 18 years old, and you've got all this freedom. You can stay out all night. You can sleep at someone's house. They can sleep at yours. It's kind of crazy what you can get away with. You can drink in the afternoon if you want. There's no regulation. You're suddenly a free agent in the world. This is about what to do and how to handle the absolute freedom of that. It talks about identity; with all these choices, that's when you really have to confront who you are and who you want to be."

It's the above that accounts for the "deceptively deep" part of that *Rolling Stone* quote. The rest of the movie is the "ridiculously fun" bit. "Yeah, the movie is basically one long party!" says Linklater, his voice doing a tonal equivalent of a high five. "People call it a college movie, but there's really no college in it! It ends with, like, the first second of college – it's set in the time you show up, before class starts. It's wonderful because you don't have a paper due, you don't have to be studying for anything, you haven't even gone to class! It's kind of the last moment where you're just completely unburdened with anything."

New faces

Blake Jenner. Zoey Deutch. Tyler Hoechlin. Ryan Guzman. Glen Powell. Ringing any bells? But before you think *EWS!!* features a low-rent cast, consider this: before *Dazed And Confused* gifted its young ensemble a host of memorable roles, Matthew McConaughey, Ben Affleck, Milla Jovovich, Joey Lauren Adams and Adam Goldberg were nobodies, too. Throughout his career, Linklater has evidenced an uncanny knack for unearthing talent, and he's confident he's done it again.

>>



College life: communal eating, table football and midnight parties set the mood.





Pitcher perfect: Jake (Blake Jenner, second left) gets to know his new housemates.

"I feel certain of it," he says. "There's some really, really wonderful talent here. I mean, there always is a lot of talent out there; it's just having an opportunity. You know, *Dazed* had a lot of female parts. This is more guy-oriented. Still, it was a lot of fun, and these guys are great. Amazing. When people see the movie, they usually come out raving about the cast, how much they like everybody."

The lead is Jake, played by Jenner, who was born in Miami in 1992 and moved to LA in 2010, aged 18, with just $2,500 stuffed in his pocket. Surviving on potatoes and eggs, his big break came when he won the second season of reality TV show *The Glee Project*, landing the prize of a seven-episode character arc in season four of *Glee*. Only his character, Ryder Lynn, won Jenner a gong for TV Breakout Star at the 2013 Teen Choice Awards; naturally he found himself promoted to a regular in season five. Doors opened: he can now also be seen starring opposite his wife, Melissa Benoist, in *Supergirl*.

Glee guy

So what made Linklater hang his movie on Jenner? *Everybody Wants Some!!*, like *Dazed And Confused*, is a movie that oozes cool. The same can't be said of *Glee* and *Supergirl*, whatever your views as to their quality.

Linklater chuckles once more. "Well, I hadn't seen *Glee*," he says. "He just came in. He was thoughtful. He was kind of an everyman. He's really fearless. And he's just enough of an athlete. All these guys play on a baseball team, even though it's not in season so there's not much [*baseball*]. Most of those guys in *Dazed* would play on football teams; just not in the movie. Similar here. They're all athletes, but there's very little sport. Blake, he just had this wonderful quality. I told him, 'I'm so glad I found you. I really wasn't finding that guy.' It's just the hardest part to play. He's wonderful."

Jenner's character is our avatar into college life in Texas (where else?). Just as freshman Mitch was the guy experiencing a walk on the wild side for the first time in *Dazed*, Jake is the somewhat tentative newbie who finds himself pressured into all kinds of extreme partying. There is booze, drugs and sex, naturally, and all of it is accompanied by a wall-to-wall soundtrack of period-appropriate music.

"Every song in the movie I have a very personal relationship to," Linklater begins. "I can tell you where we played that album. I remember it all very well. I remember, you'd go from music blaring in your house to music blaring in your car to music blaring at a party. It was the soundtrack of your life. But whereas *Dazed* was pretty much rock and roll at that time, this movie has early hip-hop, punk and new wave. It has country. *Urban Cowboy* had come out that summer and the country thing was kind of hip everywhere. There were all these bars that were country-themed that you found yourself going to, just for a drink special or to chase girls. And disco! The guys in *Everybody Wants Some!!* are in discos a lot."

The time, after all, is September 1980. Music is changing fast, with genres emerging, clashing and melding, even if fashion will take a couple of years to catch up. This is worth mentioning: anyone who's taken a look at the ace trailer might be forgiven for presuming the film is actually set in the '70s – hair, makeup and clothes are a long way from the horrorshows on display in John Hughes' teen movies or that celebration of all things '80s-kitsch, *The Wedding Singer*. "1980 is a transitional moment," Linklater agrees. "If I'd >>







"Blake Jenner has a wonderful quality. He's an everyman, really fearless" **RICHARD LINKLATER**



Party on, dude

Leading man Blake Jenner talks us through his wild ride...



So how did you score the lead in a Richard Linklater movie?
A few auditions. I just went in and kind of talked about myself – what I like to do and what sports I play, and then we did some scenes. When I auditioned with Rick [*Linklater*] I was super nervous. I had just seen *Boyhood* twice and I thought it was awesome.

Tell us about your character, Jake...
He's a pitcher. He's coming in from his hometown not knowing what to expect. He moves into the house, gets acquainted with his roommates, and is introduced to a world of unsupervised adulthood. He goes on this wild ride with all these characters.

You wrestled and played football at university. Did you ever play baseball?
Never! I didn't know jack until finally getting on location and going to baseball practice with the guys. We got to work with some coaches, which was pretty cool. They taught us all how to throw a ball.

Were you a fan of *Dazed And Confused* before you auditioned for this part?
I love it. I watched it growing up with my friends. *Everybody Wants Some!!* is similar in that it's shedding light on a certain era, and we're having fun, but college is so different to high school. I moved out to LA after finishing high school; I didn't get the college experience, so it was really fun diving into that. We lived together for three weeks, with Rick. We got a dorm situation going on. We had beers, played videogames, practised baseball with each other.

What's Linklater's process?
Two to three weeks of rehearsals, so that everybody knows their character and the dynamics of the script. Like a play. Working with Rick was awesome. He's so welcoming and warm. He embraced improv. Anytime someone had a thought or a funny line they'd discovered about the character, he was open to it.

A very different experience to *Glee*, presumably?
Yeah. But *Glee* was awesome. I don't think I'll ever get the chance to sing, dance and act on the same set again. Here, you had more time to get everything done. *Glee*, you get a recording session and then a dance rehearsal and then you've got to do a scene, all on the same day.

Was there one particular scene in *Everybody Wants Some!!* that you loved shooting?
The punk rock scene. We had a great time doing that. The band was on the stage, everybody was really spinning, the music was real. It was super-loud. There was no choice but to get into it. We were all given a free pass to be weirdos when we were partying! **JG**



Taken to 'tache: Richard Linklater crosses paths (and arms) with Juston Street.

set the movie in 1984, you'd have a whole different movie, a whole different look."

No pressure

With all the focus on *Everybody Wants Some!!* being *Dazed And Confused 2* (as it's listed on IMDb under the Also Known As subhead), it's easy to lose sight of the fact that it's also Linklater's follow-up to *Boyhood*, the most critically lauded film of his career. Of course, the writer/director was no stranger to rave reviews – *Slacker*, *Dazed And Confused* and the *Before* Trilogy (*Sunrise*, *Sunset*, *Midnight*) all hit the sweet spot – but it was *Boyhood* that made him a major player on the mainstream awards circuit, scooping Golden Globes, BAFTAs and Oscars.

But here's the thing: nothing changed. Linklater didn't feel any more freedom than before because he's always enjoyed freedom, and he didn't feel any more pressure because *Everybody Wants Some!!* is first and foremost a blast. Asked for an example of the freedom granted to him, he says, "Early in the movie, they're in a car driving to a bar and they're listening to 'Rapper's Delight', singing along and passing the mic. I remember guys doing that at the time. The scene goes on for a long time [*laughs*]. There's nothing going on narratively – they're just stuck at a stop sign – but all this energy is coming out of the car. People were like, 'You know, you could cut that scene a lot of shorter'. I said, 'No, it's so early in the movie, it sets a tone. That's what this movie's going to be – just hanging out with these guys.' It ended up being everyone's favourite scene!"

> "This will keep me out of going to awards shows – the stakes are low" **RICHARD LINKLATER**

Linklater's used to defending his corner and it's something he enjoys. His whole career people have made suggestions, and he's welcomed their input, pointing out that it's the job of his editors and producers. But if he feels strongly about a decision, and can justify it, then Linklater has final say.

But what of the other reason he felt no pressure on this movie – that it's primarily one big party, a chance to blow off steam?

"This will keep me out of having to go to awards shows! It takes the air out of all that; the stakes are low. This movie does not invite you to think of it as a serious movie." He pauses. "But, strangely, it's also a continuation of *Boyhood*. This film begins right where *Boyhood* ends, with a guy going to college..."

Whoa, a spiritual sequel to *Dazed And Confused and* a sorta sequel to *Boyhood*? We want some. TF



Lively Blake: Jenner with Zoey Deutch and (below) Wyatt Russell.



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Family values

A never-better Viggo Mortensen stars in the Sundance hit that's on the road to breakout success. WORDS **MATT MAYTUM**

DIRECTOR Matt Ross
STARRING Viggo Mortensen, George MacKay, Frank Langella, Kathryn Hahn
ETA 2016 TBC

At the Sundance Film Festival, everybody is always on the lookout for the next *Little Miss Sunshine*. That charming, idiosyncratic dramedy that could make the conversion from loveable indie to awards season dark horse. In 2016, *Captain Fantastic* laid claim to that title. It might sound like a superhero movie, but that couldn't be any further from the reality. It's actually a heartfelt, sometimes heartwrenching, family tale that grounds its high-concept with spot-on performances, keenly observed truths, and plenty of fish-out-of-water comedy.

It also gifts Viggo Mortensen with his best role in years. In fact, it's hard to think of a part more suitable for the actor/artist/poet/photographer who shunned the mainstream post-*Lord Of The Rings* for uncompromising indies and David Cronenberg thrillers. Here he plays Ben, a father raising his six children in the forests of the US's Pacific Northwest. Living off the land, Ben teaches his kids to hunt, forage and fend for themselves, as well as offering lessons on history, classic literature, astronomy and more.

Writer-director Matt Ross sent his lead a stack of books by various award-winning naturalists, scientists and philosophers, to help him get into character, though he needn't have bothered. "I thought that was a great way to frame some of the knowledge that this family would have," says Ross. "It turns out Viggo had read all the books already." Mortensen himself freely admits, "I didn't have to do a ton of research about living in the forest and being comfortable in nature."

Ross (who began his career as an actor with supporting turns in the likes of *American Psycho* and *The Aviator*) took some inspiration for the story from his own childhood in technology-free communes. "I'm fascinated by all the issues that revolve around parenting," he explains. "Ben has given up the outside world and whatever personal ambitions it held for him to devote his life to being the best father he thinks he can be. The question becomes: is he the best father in the world, or the worst? Is what he's doing insane or insanely great?"

Mortensen became actively involved in the development process, adding his own notes to the script. "He had wonderful and insightful ideas about everything, including adding his own original music to the film," says Ross. With method man Mortensen known for bonding with his horses and never letting go of his sword on *LOTR*, and scaring bystanders with his Russian gangster tattoos during the *Eastern Promises* shoot, commitment comes as standard. He didn't even stay in the hotel provided for the duration of the *Captain Fantastic* shoot, opting instead to rough it on the set he helped to design and the surrounding environs. "We just knew he was in the forest somewhere," says producer Lynette Howell Taylor.

It seems there's a lot of Mortensen in the role. "I like to offer up things of my own that might be appropriate," says the actor, who arrived with a truck full of character-building items. "Many of the books you see on the bus and in our home are books I brought. There's also my canoe, things from the kitchen, knives and clothes. I brought a lot of plants for the garden."

While the film starts within the idyllic 'paradise' set-up, by the end of the first act, Ben and his six children – played by George MacKay, Samantha Isler, Annalise Basso, Nicholas Hamilton, Shree Crooks and Charlie Shotwell – are on the road, venturing with trepidation back into modern capitalist society to pay their



Family matters: Ben (Viggo Mortensen) and his unconventional brood must face conventional society.

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"I didn't have to do a ton of research about living in the forest..." **VIGGO MORTENSEN**

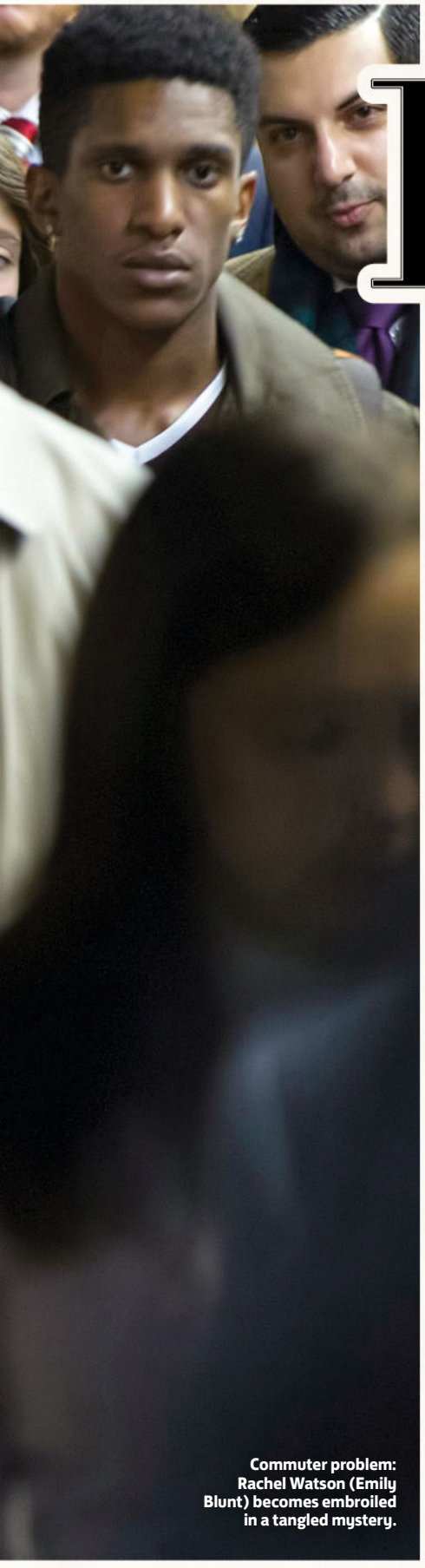
respects to recently deceased wife/mother Leslie, who had been receiving hospital treatment. "At that point, *Captain Fantastic* becomes a road movie as they travel to New Mexico where Leslie's parents [*played by Frank Langella and Ann Dowd*] live," adds Mortensen. "We come into conflict with them because of our way of life."

That contrast is the source of the film's emotion, but also its humour. From the children's fascination with fast food and bemusement towards videogames, to Ben's freedom with nudity at a campsite ("It's just a penis – every man has one"), this is that rare dramedy that's genuinely as funny as it is moving. As a result, it should have no trouble crossing over to the mainstream. Not that Ross believes in the notion that there are two distinct categories for complex, character-driven arthouse pictures and exciting, rollercoaster-ride blockbusters.

"The Holy Grail, for me, is a movie that is both thought-provoking and emotionally moving – an entertaining way to spend two hours," he concludes. "I hope we created a fun and diverting journey that makes you laugh and cry, but also gives you something worth thinking about." Wouldn't that be fantastic. TF



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Commuter problem: Rachel Watson (Emily Blunt) becomes embroiled in a tangled mystery.

Lady vanishes

Emily Blunt talks this year's Gone Girl...

WORDS **JAMES MOTTRAM**

DIRECTOR Tate Taylor
STARRING Emily Blunt, Justin Theroux, Rebecca Ferguson, Luke Evans
ETA 7 October

When Paula Hawkins' debut novel, *The Girl On The Train*, was published in early 2015, it was swiftly dubbed 'the new *Gone Girl*' – and for good reason. A multi-perspective missing person mystery, Hawkins' thriller carried the same flavour as Gillian Flynn's runaway hit. Selling three million copies in the US alone by mid-last year, DreamWorks swiftly snapped up the movie rights in an effort to echo *Gone Girl*'s $369m box office.

The comparisons don't stop there, with a British star earmarked for the title role. In this case, Emily Blunt, cast as Rachel Watson, a lonely divorcee who rides the train into the big city every day, passing by her ex-husband Tom's new home that he shares with his former mistress Anna and their new baby. Adding to the intrigue is a house just a few doors down, occupied by the seemingly perfect Megan and her husband – a relationship Rachel envies, until one day Megan disappears.

Playing someone who becomes increasingly entwined in the mystery after waking up unable to recall her own whereabouts on the night of Megan's disappearance, Blunt feels the story is more than just a whodunnit. "Yes, there is a thriller element but that was never the aspect of the book that I found the most exciting – 'Who murdered who?' It was actually that this is a great portrayal of three incredibly damaged women, particularly my character, and it's about addiction and it's about voyeurism and what we think we see and don't see."

Purists may carp that Hawkins' novel has been relocated from London to upstate New York in the adaptation by Erin Cressida Wilson (*Secretary*, *Men, Women & Children*). But the author has given her blessing, noting: "I'm not really concerned about the repositioning and I think it is the type of story that could take place in any commuter town."

Directed by Tate Taylor (*The Help*, *Get On Up*), the essence of the book will seemingly remain the same – with Blunt using words like "intense" and "violent" to describe it. "The fact that your heroine is a black-out drunk is really exciting – she becomes the most unreliable witness and spends the whole film trying to remember what she saw because she was drunk. And I think it's a thrilling way to work."

Recalling Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, which similarly boasted a memory-addled protagonist, "It's a very visual film," promises Blunt, "and we have a very extraordinary DP shooting it – Charlotte Bruus Christensen." It's also got an intriguing cast, with Rebecca Ferguson (*Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*) brought on to play Anna, Justin Theroux (*Inland Empire*) as Tom and Haley Bennett (*Music And Lyrics*) as Megan.

While there were changes on the casting carousel due to scheduling conflicts – Theroux replaced Chris Evans, and Luke Evans took over from Jared Leto to play Megan's husband Scott – there can be no doubt about the buzz around what promises to be one of the autumn's must-see movies. Ferguson even reportedly took herself out of the running for the female lead opposite Channing Tatum in *X-Men* spin-off *Gambit* to land the character of Anna.

For Blunt, the part has been little short of revelatory. "It's the most challenging role I've ever been asked to do, and the role that requires all of me. Very exposing, very exciting work," she says. "It's working in a very emotional way... It's not a walk in the park, in any capacity." Indeed, given the success Rosamund Pike experienced taking the lead in *Gone Girl*, with a first Oscar nomination, there's every chance that Blunt, who narrowly missed out for *Sicario* this year, will follow suit. Now that would be a train worth catching. TF







Blades of glory

Michael Fassbender free runs his way through 15th-Century Spain in the killer videogame adaptation.

WORDS **JORDAN FARLEY**

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Art attack: Michael Fassbender's trapped assassin ancestor makes use of his time.

DIRECTOR Justin Kurzel
STARRING Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons, Ariane Labed
ETA 26 December

Videogame movies have a toxic reputation, and for good reason, as anyone who's seen the retina-soiling *Super Mario Bros.* can attest. But if any film is going to break the console to screen curse it's *Assassin's Creed*. The mega-budget adaptation of Ubisoft's phenomenally successful stab-'em-up series reunites the key creative talent behind 2015's extraordinary *Macbeth*, including stars Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard, director Justin Kurzel and cinematographer Adam Arkapaw. The Fass is also producing for the first time, but as someone who readily admits to playing the games only a few times, what convinced him to put all his chips on (blood) red?

"I thought it was a really cool concept to start from," Fassbender tells *Total Film*. "I wanted to take an audience on a fantasy ride, but give them something that fits some sort of scientific theory. That was a really interesting element to the game."

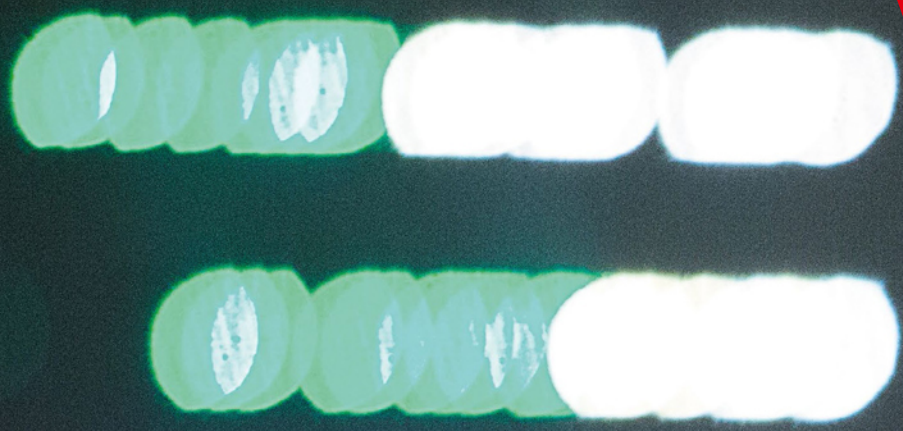
The pseudo-science that drives *Assassin's Creed*'s millenia-spanning mythology is powered by the Animus – a machine that allows people in the present to relive the memories of their ancestors. Enter Callum Lynch (Fassbender, clean shaven), an outsider institutionalised since his teens until he's recruited by the mysterious Abstergo Industries because of his genetic connection to 15th Century Spaniard Aguilar (Fassbender, beardy). The agile assassin and his fellow brotherhood of killers have been locked in a conflict with the Templars for centuries but unlike the games, which have increasingly focused on historical action over contemporary intrigue, the film will offer a closer connection between the two eras. "The real challenge is how you breach the present and the past," says Kurzel. "We have many devices that we've worked into the present that almost feel as though the history of the film is shadowing the present day."

Set in the same universe as the games, but featuring an entirely new location and mostly new characters (we'd put good money on the series' most popular protagonist, Ezio Auditore da Firenze, getting at least a wink-and-nod mention), the film is being made with both long-standing fans and viewers new to a world of hidden blades and x-ray eagle vision in mind. It's a smart move; often videogame-based movies fail because they attempt to translate their story to a different, less suitable medium, but *Assassin's Creed* has been built for the cinema from the ground up. Though it will share the series' central conflict, with the film's heroes and villains occupying near identical, morally murky territory. In essence they're two sides of the same throwing knife, the early Renaissance equivalent of Team Cap vs Team Iron Man with the Assassins striving for free will even if it risks chaos, while the Templars crave control in order to keep people safe.

> "The challenge is how you breach the present and the past" JUSTIN KURZEL

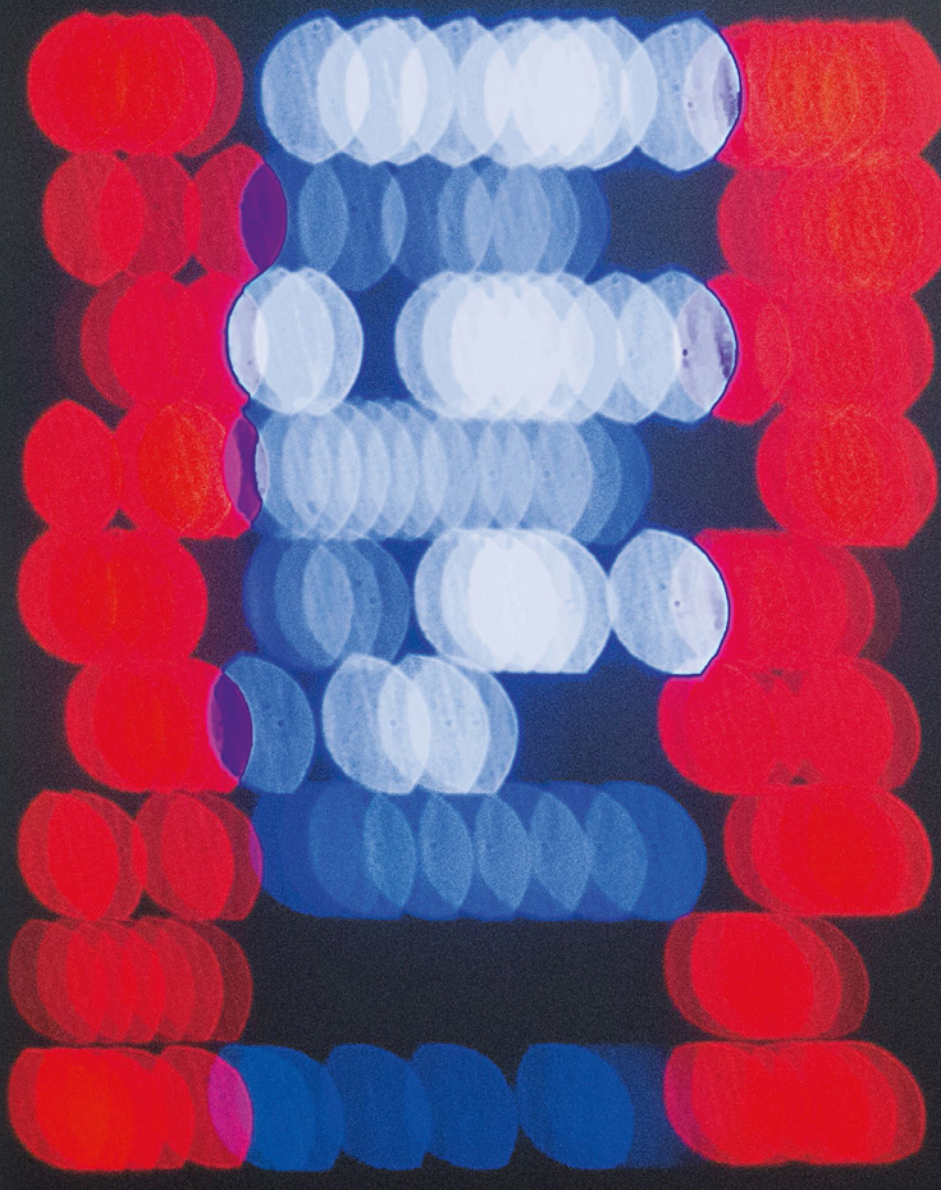
With the modern day, Abstergo-set sequences (also featuring Jeremy Irons' Abstergo boss Alan Rikkin, and Marion Cotillard as his daughter) filming in London, and the historical parts shooting on location in sundrenched Spain and Malta, it's already the frontrunner for this year's most visually distinctive blockbuster. The expansive sets, practical weaponry and intricately choreographed, in-camera parkour action were all part of Kurzel's plan to give the film a grand but grounded feel in keeping with his earthy adaptation of *Macbeth*. "I really was reluctant to film it all on green screen in a car park," Kurzel laughs. "Those great films like *Lawrence Of Arabia* – you can feel the effort going into them in terms of trying to recreate a world through costumes and through sets and locations that immerse you. That, to me, was very important." TF

MODERN WARFARE



Helen Mirren dons fatigues and drives the drones in hot-topic military thriller **Eye In The Sky**. Total Film meets the team who are asking the difficult questions in a morally murky climate.

WORDS **PAUL BRADSHAW**



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Facing facts: insurgents attack, (right) Foreign Secretary James Willett (Iain Glen) makes tough decisions and (far right) Jama Farah (Barkhad Abdi) works covertly in the field.

Imagine that you're standing beside a railway line and a train is rushing towards you. Just ahead, the track splits into two. Stuck on one set of tracks is a car with five people in it, and on the other side is a car with one person in it. If you don't do anything, the train is going to kill five people. But, if you pull a lever in front of you, the train will take the other track and just kill one. What would you do?"

Gavin Hood doesn't wait for an answer, which is good, because *Total Film* doesn't have one.

"OK, if you say yes, you *would* pull the lever, you *would* trade one life for five, let's stand you on a bridge overlooking the railway line instead. There's still five people stuck on the tracks, and there's still a train hurtling towards them, but this time there's no lever to pull – there's a large man standing on the edge of the bridge. If you want to stop the train, you have to reach out and push him off. Is it still just a numbers game, now that you have to actually get your hands dirty?"

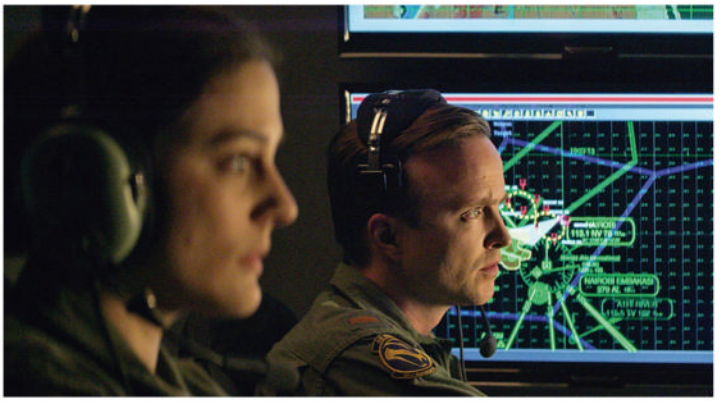
Getting excited now, he takes it a stage further.

"OK, so you might push him – but what if I ask you if *you're* ready to jump off the bridge? It's still one life for five... And what if those five lives belong to your kids, your family..."

Stumping us with 'The Trolley Experiment', an ethical conundrum often put to law and philosophy students, Hood breaks down the crux of *Eye In The Sky* – a film that swaps trains for Hellfire missiles, five lives for five hundred and imaginary scenarios for real human tragedies. Hood describes it as "the trolley experiment on steroids".

Splitting the action between a Nairobi suburb, a military bunker in Hampshire, a boardroom in Westminster and a cramped metal box in Las Vegas, *Eye In The Sky* starts us off with an easy one. A drone plane flying over Kenya spots a terrorist cell gearing up for a suicide bombing – one click of the trigger will drop a missile through the roof and prevent a much bigger catastrophe. Simple, right? But what if there's a cute little girl selling bread outside the building you're about to blow up? It's the first impossible question of many that *Eye In The Sky* asks the audience – with Dame Helen Mirren, Aaron Paul, Jeremy Northam, Iain Glen, Barkhad Abdi and Alan Rickman, in his final on-screen role, picking sides as the pilots and politicians weighing lives across their laptop screens.

"I read scripts every week," says Hood, returning to the political playgrounds of *Rendition* and *Tsotsi* after 2013's YA sci-fi *Ender's Game*. "Some of them are good, but very few take you to that place where you think, 'I *have* to make this'. When I first read Guy Hibbert's script, I had the same experience that I hope we've given the audience – I kept turning the page, finding myself more and more tense. I knew I had a pretty good thriller





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on my hands, but at the same time it kept provoking questions that had no easy, glib answers. I wanted the audience to feel like they're part of that conversation. Almost like the jury in the courtroom. It's not good vs evil. It's not about revenge. It's never that simple."

With the recent news that registered drones now outnumber fighter jets in the US airforce – as well as the dozens of daily reported (and unreported) aerial strikes across the Middle East – the film was an opportunity for everyone involved to join an important global debate about the face of modern warfare.

"You know, it wasn't so much the role as the movie," admits Mirren, playing against type as the no-nonsense British Colonel who's itching for the chance to take out the terrorist cell she's been tracking for years. "I signed up because I'd love to be a part of this movie. It incidentally turned out to be a really interesting role, but it was one that I would never have imagined before I was offered it."

Poring over a computer screen in an English bunker, Mirren's Colonel Katherine Powell sides with Rickman's Lieutenant Frank Benson in Westminster – both trying to convince a roomful of politicians to stop worrying about the ethics (and media fallout) of killing a girl to save others.

"It's horrendous," reflects Mirren. "But I'm sure that people go through it – in war, you go through these moments where you have to make unbearable choices in a split second. You have to be the kind of person who has the ability to make the decision and not go, 'I don't know; should I do this, should I do that?' I think I'd be that person. I don't have a military mind."

Originally written for a male actor, Powell's character changed when Hood convinced screenwriter Guy Hibbert that the film needed to feel universal – asking questions of everyone in the audience about the life or death decisions being made every day in their name.

> 'THE MACHINES ARE OUT THERE, AND THEY'RE GETTING STRONGER' **GAVIN HOOD**

Decisions, of course, that once would have been made by a soldier with his finger on a trigger in the middle of a battlefield, that are now being made by committee in boardrooms, hotel suites and, in one case played out by Iain Glen's bumbling Foreign Secretary, on the toilet.

"That happened!" laughs Hood. "I interviewed this one politician who told me that he's been on his cell phone, stuck in the bathroom, when someone's called wanting an answer whether or not they should drop a bomb in the Middle East." It's a brief moment of release in an otherwise nerve-shreddingly tense film – with Aaron >>



Eagle eye: Aaron Paul plays a rookie drone pilot; (below) Helen Mirren takes orders from Gavin Hood.





Paul's rookie drone pilot sweating over the bomb button in a Vegas container and Barkhad Abdi's covert operative dodging gunfire on the ground as the terrorists get ready to leave the building, the girl (newcomer Aisha Takow) gets nearer to the blast zone and the real-time clock ticks off the moments left to make the call.

'THIS FILM SHOWS US WHAT DRONE WARFARE REALLY LOOKS LIKE'

BARKHAD ABDI

"You could feel the tension on set every day," says Abdi, picking the film as his first since receiving an Oscar nod for Best Supporting Actor in *Captain Phillips*. "It's such a sensitive topic, and it's so current. But it's a story that doesn't get told. No one is talking about drone warfare in Hollywood. Aside from everything else the film says, it tells the story of the innocent people who get caught up in war, on both sides."

ONE SHOT

Filming entirely on a Cape Town backlot, Hood shot everyone's part separately to keep costs down – drawing eye-lines on blank screens and reading all the missing lines himself to get the right reactions. It's an odd parallel to the film's portrait of modern war – no longer waged on a single battlefield but phoned, emailed and Skyped-in across multiple continents, leaving technology to do all the heavy lifting.

"I didn't even really know what drones were," admits Abdi (along with Hood and Mirren and pretty much everyone else). "Gavin showed me some of the real technology out in California and you can't even imagine stuff like that. If nothing else, this film gives us an understanding of what drone warfare *really* looks like – and what it costs."

"Some people chuckle when they see the bird..." sighs Hood, second-guessing the obvious questions about 'The Hummingbird', a robotic camera disguised as a flying, flapping bird that Abdi's undercover agent flies around corners to peer through the windows of the terrorist stronghold. "But the real version of that was built five years ago!" Later replaced in the film by an even smaller robo-beetle that silently, secretly spies from a rafter in the roof, Hood seems genuinely worried that the tech in the film is already slipping behind the times. "You can be assured that everything you see in the film is very real," he says. "It's all going to look pretty basic in a few years time..."

Not that technology is the real issue, with Hood making us painfully aware that there's a real human being behind every aerial strike. With around 30 per cent of drone pilots reporting some form of post-traumatic stress (double the numbers of fighter pilots), the film opens up another important line of debate about the psychological cost of drone warfare.

"We talked to a lot of pilots," explains Hood, basing Aaron Paul's rookie on a mix of real USAF pilots that he and Hibbert interviewed before filming. "We talked about what it was like to pull the trigger for the first time. Some of them left afterwards and never came back. And then there are some, like Brandon Bryant [*the US pilot who made headlines in 2012 by speaking out against drone warfare*] who had taken out many targets until the day he killed a child and couldn't take it anymore."

Speaking to everyone from military intelligence officers and arms manufacturers to politicians and journalists, Hood did everything he could to make sure *Eye In The Sky* was as accurate as

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Hard hitting: *Eye In The Sky* highlights the harsh contrast between warzone and (above left) war room.

possible – unearthing a lot of facts that he half wishes were still buried.

"What really shocked me was where the military are going next," he almost whispers. "We spoke to the guys who make these things. The amount of computing power available today means you can have *swarms* of armed drones, and you can fly that swarm into an assembly, a party, a convention, whatever... And then you can tell those drones to 'identify and destroy'. The more people you talk to about this, the creepier it gets. It's not a theoretical conversation from James Cameron any more – it's very real. The machines are out there, and getting stronger."

And that's not the half of it. Raising more judgement day questions than just robo-right and robo-wrong, *Eye In The Sky* enters a much bigger debate about whether the means of drone warfare will ever justify the ends – something that Hood still doesn't have an answer for.

"Extracting the soldier from the battlefield is a very complicated new idea," continues Hood. "Wherever our enemy moves, we, at the moment, feel justified in attacking him. The question is what that means for the laws of war. And don't forget, whatever we do, the enemy will do too. You can only be the first person with a new weapon for so long. Are we going to have drones watching us on the streets of London every day? Some would say yes. If you're a police officer, if you're Helen Mirren's character, you want all the tools at your disposal to do your job and keep people safe. On the other hand, if you're living under the constant surveillance of armed robots – as people in Pakistan are doing at this very minute – it's sort of horrifying.

"There might not be any easy answers, but that shouldn't stop us asking the questions." TF

***Eye In The Sky* opens on 15 April.**

EYE IN THE SKY



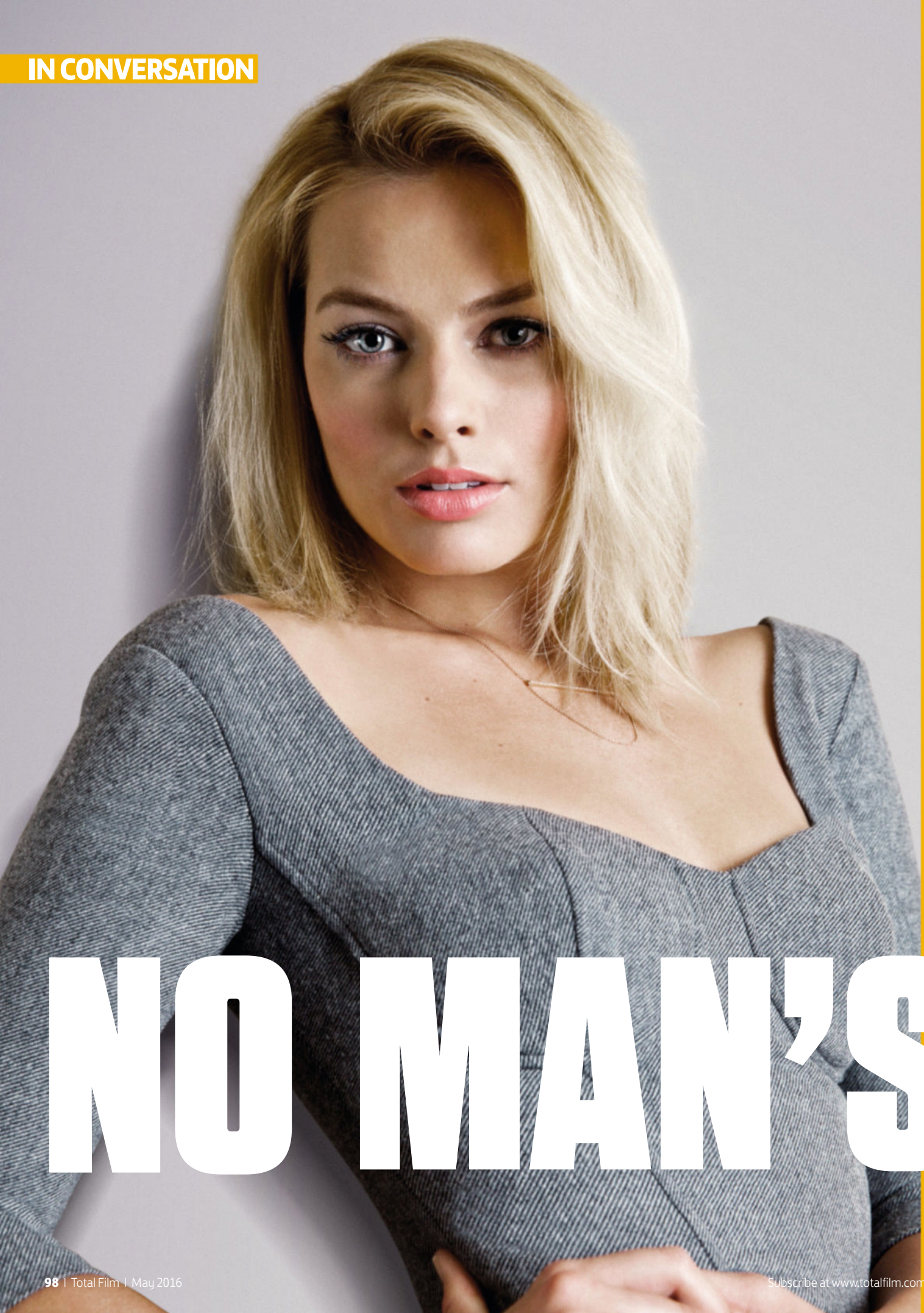
FOND FAREWELLS

Mirren and Hood remember the great Alan Rickman...

Helen Mirren: "Oh, my lovely Alan. Isn't he wonderful in this movie? He's so good. And it's classic Alan because it's so full of intelligence and character and yet so minimal. He was an absolute genius and we've lost him far too early. He would have had many, many great roles to come. Quite apart from the fact that he was a wonderful guy. A really extraordinary, committed and thoroughly decent person. I'm still in a state of shock about it. I looked at a picture of him just today and thought, 'I can't believe that I'm not going to see him again'."

Gavin Hood: "I just so wish that he were here today to talk about this film because he was such a highly intelligent man, such an extremely articulate man. He was very involved in social and political questions and he really connected with this material and spoke very eloquently about it on set. I just feel so very lucky that I got to work with him. I think what Alan brings to his role, as he did to all his roles, is this deep sense of humanity. He was a slightly out-of-the-box choice, but he brought a real intelligence and, more importantly, a real humour to the film. I'm going to miss him greatly."





NO MAN'S

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LAND

Tina Fey and Margot Robbie head to the Afghanistan frontline in fact-based war zone dramedy, **Whiskey Tango Foxtrot**. But can the war on terror be funny? And why is a Bechdel test movie such a hard sell? Total Film takes coffee with Liz Lemon and Harley Quinn... WORDS **MATT MAYTUM**

PORTRAITS **AL SEIB / LOS ANGELES TIMES / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES, MAARTEN DE BOER / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES**

It didn't seem hard at all until you go to try to sell it to people," laughs Tina Fey of making a comedy set in a war zone. "Like, 'Maybe we should say that the vehicles transform into robots, and then they fight each other,' and you're going to be halfway through the film before you realise that didn't happen."

It's February 2016, and Fey is sitting on a sofa in a suite in New York's Ritz Carlton Hotel that overlooks a frosty Central Park. Her taupe jumper and trousers are an almost military shade, which is fitting, given the movie under discussion today. The *30 Rock* creator/star's latest film project is a loose adaptation of war correspondent Kim Barker's memoir, *The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days In Afghanistan And Pakistan* (Fey plays Kim *Baker*, as well as producing).

While it might sound like a tough sell against readily-packaged franchise blockbusters, a light touch might be just what's needed when it comes to covering a seemingly endless war (The Obama Administration now calls it 'the long war'), and Fey is offering a fresh perspective (there's not many movies covering the conflict from a funny and/or female standpoint). Plus, the sex, drugs and partying lifestyle of the journos ensconced in the Kabul 'fun house' certainly adds plenty of colour...

Perched next to Fey on the sofa is Australian co-star Margot Robbie, who plays tenacious reporter Tanya Vanderpoel (based on an amalgamation of real people). Wearing a black strappy jumpsuit over a white roll-neck, the former *Neighbour* and future Suicide Squad member sits cross-legged in bare feet, revealing a small anchor tattoo below one ankle. "I was probably halfway through shooting *Focus* with [*directors Glenn Ficarra and John Requa*] when I told them, 'Whatever project you ever do again, I want to be a part of it,'" she beams. "And they said, 'Well, funny you mention that because you should have a read of this script...' And then I heard that Tina was going to be playing the main character, and I thought, 'What a brilliant learning experience.'"





Killer cast: Robbie and Fey are joined by the likes of Martin Freeman (below) as fellow war journalist Iain MacKelpie.

With Robbie now adding indie film producing to impending mega-stardom on her CV, it's no surprise that she looks up to Fey, whose gentle, self-deprecating tone and megawatt aura of niceness belies the fact that she has made a serious business of comedy, from heading up *Saturday Night Live*'s writing staff, to creating sitcoms, to establishing her own production company.

Over coffee and a shared bag of chocolate-coated raisins, Fey and Robbie chat comedy, political correctness, and the Bechdel test.

So you didn't know each other before you started work on *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*?

TINA FEY: No. We'd never met. I saw Margot in *The Wolf Of Wall Street* and thought she was amazing. So, when John and Glenn suggested her for the film, I was like, "Yes! 100 per cent."

Margot, were you previously familiar with Tina's work?

MARGOT ROBBIE: Never heard of her. [*laughs*] No, obviously I'm very, very aware of all her work and a big fan. I was very excited at the prospect of getting to see her work in person. When something translates so well on screen, I'm kind of curious how they did it in real life. Everyone has a very different process, so it is really fascinating to watch.

TF: Yeah – that's what I find the weird thing about movies. I've never worked with these people before. You spend a little bit of the time figuring out, like, "How do you like to work? Do you like to rehearse? Or to talk about it? Or not talk about it?" We fell into things very easily, which is such a relief, because you don't know.

MR: Sometimes you're like, "Do you want to run lines?" They're like, "No." And you're like, "Oh, you don't do that? Sorry."

TF: "You're one of those. OK, got it." [*laughs*]











Table for two: Kim Barker (Tina Fey) and Tanya Vanderpoel (Margot Robbie) share a briefing.

MR: Some people are like, "I'm a Method actor." You're like, "Should I call you by your name or your character name? Am I offending you?" It was really nice to work with someone who wasn't precious about those things. Just easy.

How was it working with someone who is a producer as well as an actor?

MR: I was really watching closely. I was like, "This is kind of what I dream to be one day.

TF: Yeah, for sure – you have your own kind of internal... It's nice that the Bechdel test has a name now, because I feel like internally we all have that. Now it has a name. When we look at stories and scripts, we're like, "OK, what do I get to do?"

MR: I haven't been intentionally ticking those things off a list, but I know that if I get to the end of a script that doesn't tick all those boxes, I don't want to do it.

'MY DAUGHTERS LOVED MARGOT. I KEPT ASKING THEM IF THEY THOUGHT SHE WAS A REAL DISNEY PRINCESS' Tina Fey

I'm going to soak it all in." She made it look very effortless, which is reassuring.

TF: I think it's a little bit like planning your wedding. If you do all the work before, you can actually enjoy your wedding. That's the goal. And then definitely there's always something where like, someone's going to fight at the bar. "OK, I have to deal with that now." But hopefully not too much of that.

MR: That's actually a brilliant analogy.

This is one of those rare films that easily passes the Bechdel test. Was that a big part of the appeal for wanting to get it made?

TF: Yeah, for sure – you have your own kind of internal... It's nice that the Bechdel test has a name now, because I feel like internally we all have that. Now it has a name. When we look at stories and scripts, we're like, "OK, what do I get to do?"

MR: I haven't been intentionally ticking those things off a list, but I know that if I get to the end of a script that doesn't tick all those boxes, I don't want to do it.

From a production side, is that something you feel you have responsibility to seek out?

TF: I think it happens organically. I think Lorne Michaels [Saturday Night Live *and* 30 Rock *producer*] said this to me once. He's like, "You should always make movies that you yourself would want to go see." Like, if someone offers you a movie – which, by the way, no one does – and is like, "This is a crappy blockbuster, but it'll make a lot of money." If your answer is "I would never go see it", maybe you shouldn't do it. That still leaves you plenty of room. You can still make a silly movie or an adventure movie or a kid's movie. I think it happens organically.

Your characters bond in *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*, partly due to being the only women there. Is there anything special you have to do to get that friendship to work on screen?

TF: For two weeks, we slept in a two-person sleeping bag.

MR: We braided each other's hair. We got those necklaces where it's like a love heart with a crack down the middle.

TF: Yeah, I gave her the 'Best' part, and I had the 'Friends'.

MR: [*laughs*] No. For me – and I think everyone's got a different way of going about it – I personally think it's so important to hang off set and have time where you're in the same room, not because it was put on a call sheet to be in the same room; but that you just genuinely wanted to hang. Plus, when you're shooting somewhere you don't live, that kind of happens inherently. Because everyone's always like, "What are you guys doing after work?" Unfortunately, on this shoot, I had to be gone so much for press [*for* Focus], and I didn't get to do as much of that as I usually do. But even without that, we still got to hang out and it was great. I got to have breakfast and stuff with your family, which I really loved.

TF: Oh yeah, my daughters loved Margot. I kept saying, "Do you guys think she's a real live Disney princess?" They would have just gotten in a car with her. They were just ready to go. [*laughs*]

MR: They were so cute.

>>



Taking orders: Kim faces up to Col. Hollanek (Billy Bob Thornton).

Beyond reading the book, did you have to do any real research into playing war correspondents?

TF: We both read as much as we could find and watched a lot of documentaries and real news reports and stuff. And then beyond that, you just have to imagine what it would feel like. I myself have never been in that kind of real, constant jeopardy. You can kind of only take the most stressful thing you've ever really experienced and imagine that increased. Because that's a crazy lifestyle that those people lead.

MR: Yeah. Just read as much as possible. Watched as much as possible. But it helped for me to understand the historical background. There was a scene when I'm part of the big explosion, and I didn't understand the gravity of this situation. I was kind of like, "OK, so, I'm going to 'the tribals'. OK, how would I be feeling about that? Excited – because it's a news story. OK, let me look up where this area actually is." And then I found out that it was this no man's land between Pakistan and Afghanistan. I started reading all this stuff about how the women who were from there, some of them have never seen daylight. Crazy things like that. But yeah, I've never been in those places [Whiskey Tango Foxtrot *was filmed in New Mexico*]. I can't imagine how that would genuinely feel. You just try to portray it as best you can, I suppose.

The film addresses the madness of living in the 'Kabubble', in which the danger can be addictive and you can lose grip on reality. Is there anything about living an actor's life that is a lot of fun, that you feel could be addictive and possibly dangerous?

MR: As for becoming desensitised to your surroundings, I think that's applicable to a lot of occupations. I'd hate to draw any comparisons between being an actor and a war correspondent because I think they're worlds apart, but I do think the metaphor of the frog in the pot boiling [*so slowly it doesn't realise it*] is very applicable to a lot of occupations. I think it's easy to lose sense of reality when you get caught up in something that's such an adrenaline rush sometimes, but I guess I think a lot of people in a lot of jobs do that. What do you reckon?

TF: Yeah, I think acting's on such a smaller scale and *so* much less important... [*growls*] "I've got to nail this project, I can't go to my cousin's wedding, I'm in the middle of this project, I'm feeling very special and important right now". Yeah.


Roll out: ***Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*'s desert scenes were shot in New Mexico.**

Do you both feel a lot of these serious subjects need a light-touch approach to help people engage with them?

TF: Yeah, I wonder. I think of this more as a human story, a pretty relatable story of a person saying, "I'm going to blow up my mundane life and go be a person I never could have been at home," more than really being a movie — it's not *The Kite Runner*. It's not a serious drama about how these people [*live*]. I think it's a really compelling story and I think it's a fascinating part of the world that we keep trying to figure out and fix. No one can do it.

MR: I think it is very clever – even if it probably wasn't done for this reason – to deal with issues that educate people by adding the humour. It makes it totally more accessible.

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Serious fun: the movie takes a light look at a heavy subject.

Like *The Big Short*, for example. It's a topic with so much information that I would never normally find myself able to focus on or be interested in. And having the humour there... And not just the humour, because to be funny, whoever's writing the funny stuff has to be incredibly intelligent. If it's smart and funny – and I don't think it's truly funny unless it is very smart – then I think it's a great way of getting people to pay attention to a particular issue.

Do you find your Australian and American senses of humour merge well together?

TF: I think they do. I think Australians and Americans have a lot of humour overlap. And I'm not just saying that because *Sisters* made money in Australia and I feel really good about the Australians right now.

MR: Did it? I'm glad.

TF: It did well over summer break in Australia. But I do think that we're a lot more similar... We're actually more similar than Americans and Brits.

MR: I think Australia is the bridge between the Brits and the Americans. It can either go either way. Aussies love to have a laugh. I'm not surprised that *Sisters* did well there. That's *so* the kind of movie everyone would want to go see.

'I THINK IT'S VERY CLEVER TO EDUCATE PEOPLE BY ADDING HUMOUR. IT MAKES IT TOTALLY MORE ACCESSIBLE' Margot Robbie

Tina, you said something last year about opting out of apologising for comedy. Is that something that's a problem with comedy – and even other genres – at the moment, that there seems to be so much offence taken to everything? Is it restricting?

TF: Yeah, it ruins comedy.

MR: It's ridiculous. You can't say anything. I'm not even in the comedy stakes and I find that frustrating, that I'm continually censoring everything I say in every interview in every single... Yeah, everything. And everyone's got a camera phone. Everyone's always recording you. And it's on the internet so quickly and spreads so quickly. And someone in the middle of nowhere with no journalistic credibility can write an article and have it online and seen by millions of people immediately. It's kind of getting a bit ridiculous now to be politically correct.

TF: It's very bad for comedy. Yep. You have to remember, the truth is – and the great thing about this country, and Australia too – is that you can say whatever you want. I would rather people say whatever they want and reveal themselves to me, so I can be like, "Oh, you're racist. OK, got it." I'd rather know than have everyone be like, keeping their true thoughts under wraps all the time.

Let's talk about what you've got coming up... Tina, you have lots of stuff in development, and Margot, you've got a couple of big blockbusters coming up – *Suicide Squad* and *The Legend Of Tarzan*...

MR: It's going to be busy. I've started producing, so I'm more excited about all the projects we're producing at the moment. Indie film producing is just like an uphill battle that I'd never seen the scope of before, and I'm really, really enjoying that part of it. Every little win we get on that side of things is far more satisfying right now than the big wins I think I'm having elsewhere in my career. When you really hustle for something and then you get it, it's incredibly satisfying. So, for me, my year is focused on that.

TF: The *Kimmy Schmidt* TV show I do, the second season premieres 15 April – so we just finished work on that. I'm taking this spring into the summer to do some writing, on some projects I've been waiting for the TV show to be done for. And then trying to produce a couple more movies. We're developing a script with [Girls *writer*] Sarah Heyward, based on a true story about these women who are a bunch of mums who learned how to count cards so they could go to casinos. The thing that I liked about the magazine article that it's based on was that they went to the casino and they realised that because they were mums, they were invisible. Security was not looking at them. So they were like, "Oh, we're going to take this."

MR: That's so good!

TF: And my friend Paula Pell, who wrote *Sisters*, is developing a movie hopefully for me and some friends to do with Ronda Rousey.

MR: That's amazing!

TF: It's tentatively called *Do Nothing Bitches* – not really ever permitted by the MPAA to be called *Do Nothing Bitches*, but we'll see.

Do you see your paths crossing again?

TF: I would love to work with Margot, yeah.

MR: I hope so, I really hope so.

Maybe you could team up in a *Suicide Squad* sequel...

TF: Probably. That's probably what I'll be doing. [*laughs*]

MR: Yeah. Be one of the comic-book [*characters*] – no, I want to be in your casino film. And with Ronda Rousey. She's so cool. She came to visit one day on *Suicide Squad*.

TF: Alright, good. I'll bear that in mind. TF

***Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* opens on 22 April.**



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Game changer

Khaleesi does it... She might be best known as one of the most valuable players in Game Of Thrones, but **Emilia Clarke** stars as a character closer to her down-to-earth self in bestseller adap **Me Before You**. Total Film meets the woman behind the dragons.

WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM **PORTRAIT** MILLER MOBLEY / AUGUST

A leafy mews in Harrow on the Hill is drawing a crowd. Residents in doorways, kids on scooters and barking dogs are all staring at the commotion at the end of a quaint row of terraced cottages. There, Emilia Clarke is in fits of giggles, as she tries to squeeze into the passenger seat of a car. Dressed in bright yellow and green, the *Game Of Thrones* star is having a slight problem manoeuvring her "buns of steel", as she puts it, into position.

After mothering dragons and mastering terminators, you might think the 29-year-old Brit could manage a parked car. But then Clarke might just be deep in character right now. Her latest role comes in *Me Before You*, an adaptation of Jojo Moyes' bestseller (5m copies in 32 languages) and something of a huge departure for Clarke. A romantic drama with an underlying edge, it's far removed from the fantasy that's made her famous.

Never mind that last year, Clarke was voted *Esquire*'s Sexiest Woman Alive, you've never quite seen her quite like this. When she finishes the take, she ambles over to join *Total Film* for a chat, perching those "buns of steel" on a garden wall. She looks buttercup-bright: yellow raincoat, green heels and tights, a light-olive jumper and a butterfly clip in her hair. "This is just the tip of the iceberg," she says, gesturing to her garish outfit. "It's a huge part of Lou, a huge part."

'Lou' is Louisa Clark, the skittish working-class heroine of Moyes' novel. "The closest parallel I can have is Bridget Jones, in essence," Clarke explains of her namesake. "Doesn't quite think much of herself, doesn't think before she speaks, doesn't think before she acts, tends to fall and knock things over... She just has >>

a huge presence and a huge amount of energy and a lot of crazy thoughts running around her rather bonkers mind."

Clarke was first sent the script while on the set of last year's *Terminator Genisys*, the $440m-grossing fifth film in the sci-borg series that saw her play the young(ish) Sarah Connor. "I read it and it just... literally from the first chapter, I was like, 'This is me! Oh my God, I've got to do it!' Genuinely, never in my life, have I wanted a part more than this." Turns out, Clarke is much closer to Lou than her other roles. "Of the strong women I play," she reveals, "I'm winging it!"

Certainly, she has her clumsy side: when *TF* catches up with her a few weeks later, she's on crutches due to a fractured hip. "I was running and I fell over – idiot!" she cries. "In true Lou fashion, though!" But it's more than that: strip away the flaxen locks she sports as *GOT*'s inimitable Daenerys Targaryen or the leathers worn by Sarah Connor and the real Clarke shines through: the fair-skinned, green-eyed girl-next-door.

"I'm a classic girl. I came out of my mum's stomach going 'I want to be an actor!'"

It's why she's ideal casting on *Me Before You*, a film that promises to deliver an adult romantic dramedy the likes of which haven't been made since *Terms Of Endearment* back in the '80s. "[*At the moment*], you've kind of got the weepy dramas and then you've got the romcoms," says Clarke, "but this falls in a whole new territory. Its equal parts comedy, equal parts drama – in the truest sense – and equal parts romance."

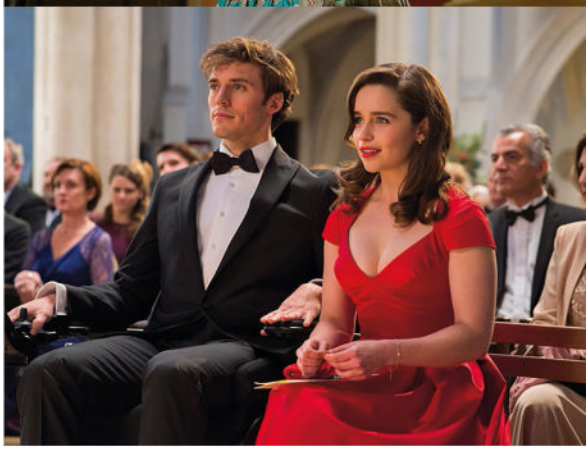
The drama comes from Lou's relationship with Will Traynor (Sam Claflin), an athletic young banker cut off in his prime after a motorbike accident leaves him paralysed and in a wheelchair. After losing her job working in a tea shop, Lou finds a new position as Traynor's carer. "She walks in all smiles and sunshine and meets this incredibly depressed, intelligent, wonderful man – they don't like each other at first," says Clarke, before pausing. "That's an understatement!"

Addressing life-and-death issues (quite literally), *Me Before You* is more than the usual will-they-won't-they-romance, with Will determined to end his life at Dignitas, the real-life Swiss organisation set up to aid those with terminal illnesses. Calling herself a "pretty liberal individual", Clarke nevertheless has to reset her brain on the subject of assisted suicide. "I myself have personally gone through an entire journey coming to terms with people who choose to go to Dignitas and their reasons for it... Working on this movie has shone a completely different light on it."

Will the film deliver? Certainly anticipation is swelling after the trailer dropped in February, sending the novel shooting back up the bestseller charts. After the disappointment of the Anne Hathaway-starring *One Day*, this might be one of the few populist book-to-screen adaptations that gets it right (encouragingly, author Moyes has also written the screenplay and acclaimed theatre director Thea Sharrock, making her feature debut, is behind the camera).

Back on the set, Clarke joins Janet McTeer, who plays Will's mother, to complete the day's scene, which rather sums up the film's emotional tightrope-walk. The tone shifts from the earlier jollity as Lou tells Will's mother, "I'm basically just here on suicide watch", in a heated exchange back in that car. Seven attempts later – "lots of lovely, lovely takes," trills Clarke – the scene is in the can. Following McTeer's last moments on the set, the whole crew clap and Clarke hugs her.

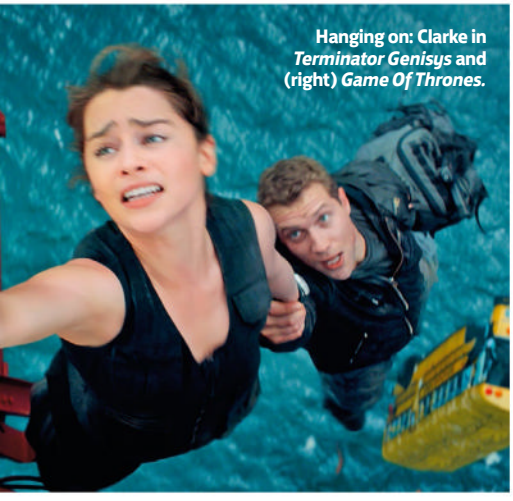




It's almost impossible to take your eyes off the infectious Clarke in these moments. "I'm a classic girl," she says. "I came out of my mum's stomach going 'I want to be an actor!'" Well, almost. When she was three years old, her mother took her to see a production of *Show Boat* that her father, a theatre sound engineer, was working on. "My dad is one of the reasons why I saw that this could be something I could do," she says. "He would bring a dose of realism to my big hopes and dreams and aspirations, which was all done with such love."

She speaks fondly of her old man, who once told her to never trust anyone with a television bigger than their bookshelf. "That's a genuine quote. I won't tell you some others because you'll realise my political alignment and maybe that's too much, but, yeah... My dad has brought me up like that." Does that mean she doesn't really watch TV? "I'll watch a bit of junk every now and again – love the [Great British] *Bake Off*! That kind of nonsense. But, yeah, I read. I've got a lot of books."

There's a down-to-earth, almost tomboy, quality to Clarke too, though. Drinking in the pub with her mates is her perfect afternoon, especially if it involves watching rugby union. "That's the sport I would watch. My dad and my brother love it. They're either watching football or rugby. Football – I can take or leave it. But rugby, at least you get to see some aggression on the pitch!" Did she play at school? "Goodness me, no. I wouldn't last a second."





Hanging on: Clarke in *Terminator Genisys* and (right) *Game Of Thrones*.

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All eyes: Clarke with Sam Claflin in *Me Before You* and (below) as *Game Of Thrones'* Daenerys Targaryen.

Raised in Berkshire and schooled in Oxford, Clarke credits her family for instilling a strong work ethic in her. "I work hard and that's what I was taught to do," she says. (Ambition is prevalent; her mother went from secretarial college to launching her own startup company). When she was 18, Clarke enrolled in London's Drama Centre; even before she graduated, she'd won a one-off part in TV show *Doctors* followed by a television movie, *Triassic Attack*.

It all changed when she landed *GOT*, replacing Tamzin Merchant, who had shot the pilot episode. The success of the show took her by enormous surprise. "*Game Of Thrones* really launched so many of us, and for me, I've been so lucky – because I've had my own time to digest it," she says. This past season, she says, is the first year she's really come to terms with the show's phenomenal global success. "I spent a lot of time going, 'What? No! How? But! Hmm!'"

In between seasons, Clarke has played it low-key. She was the love interest in *Spike Island*, the affectionate 2012 Brit-flick set around The Stone Roses' iconic 1990 gig. A year later she was playing daughter to Jude Law's profane criminal in *Dom Hemingway*, while making her first steps on Broadway as socialite Holly Golightly – the role made famous by Audrey Hepburn – in a production of *Breakfast At Tiffany's*. "I'd love to go back and do the West End," she muses.

Before any of this, Clarke returns for the sixth season of *GOT* – after the mother of all cliffhangers, which saw Kit Harington's Jon Snow slain Julius Caesar-style by his Night's Watch brethren. "I read every single script we've ever made, and I've never truly cried whilst reading one. But that, I couldn't keep it together," says Clarke. "I just started bawling. I called the boys [*showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss*], and said, 'Are you fucking kidding?' They were like, 'No, we're not!'"

Clarke took Harrington out for drinks after she read that season five finale script ("I was like, 'Dude, what the...?'"), and they regularly hang out off-set. Unlike Clarke, who doesn't get recognised much due to her own brunette locks, Harington can't escape the attention. "I take pictures of Kit with other people all the time. We're walking down the street and people are like, 'Jon Snow!' They're like, 'Can you take it?' And I'm like, 'Course I can, darling!'"

No wonder adjusting to fame has been easy. She recalls another night out at a gig with Harington and their co-star Alfie Allen (who just so happens to be the son of *Me Before You*'s producer Alison Owen) "Those boys get *picked* on! It's ridiculous! I went to the loo – I was in this cubicle, and there were two girls either side of me, and they're like, 'Oh my God, Jon Snow's outside! Who the fuck is that girl he's with? We don't know!' And I'm like, 'Hee-hee-hee!' So I can't imagine how difficult it is for them."

Later in the year, Clarke will be seen in *Voices From The Stone*, an Italian-set mystery co-starring Marton Csokas that she compares, in essence, to both Hitchcock's *Rebecca* and Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*. Dubbing the script "haunting" and "beautiful", it sounds like a real passion project. "I fell in love with it five years ago. It was one of those quiet scripts where we said, 'Whenever there's a moment', and then we decided, 'There are no moments, let's just do it!'"

While she's also circling *Set It Up*, an MGM romcom about two put-upon assistants who match-make their bosses, Clarke isn't about to box herself in. "I would like to do as much varied work as possible," she says. "I'm like, 'Right, let's try a bit of everything. Literally!' If diversity is what she craves, maybe she won't be so bummed that Paramount recently dropped the idea of two *Terminator* sequels. "I'm pushing myself as an actor," she nods, "without getting comfortable." TF

***Me Before You* opens on 3 June. *Game Of Thrones* Season 6 begins on Sky Atlantic on 24 April.**

BRINGING DOWN

Actors' director Jean-Marc Vallée is red-hot after Dallas Buyers Club and Wild. And now he's pushed Jake Gyllenhaal into giving one of his best performances as a grieving husband who tears his life, and home, to pieces in **Demolition**. Total Film dons a hard hat to talk to the main players.

WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM**

As anyone who's seen *Dallas Buyers Club* and *Wild* will know, the characters in a Jean-Marc Vallée movie do crazy things. Running drugs across the US/Mexico border, setting off solo on a 1,100-mile hike – whatever it takes to cast off society's shackles, to be yourself, to *live*. But none of them have ever done anything quite so crazy as that which Jake Gyllenhaal's character, investment banker Davis Mitchell, does deep into the action of Vallée's new drama, *Demolition*. Hefting a sledgehammer and handing a crowbar to the teenage kid who's become his best friend (more on that later), he sets about trashing his luxurious house, putting craters in walls, splintering furniture, shattering appliances. Hell, he even climbs into a bulldozer parked on the manicured lawn and drives straight through the front wall.

"It's a real house, but we built an extension so we could destroy it with a bulldozer," says Vallée. "Right in the middle of the house, we built a fake kitchen, and put up some fake walls. It was not a fake bathroom. It was the actual bathroom. We brought a fake toilet."

For this centrepiece scene, Vallée cleared out the crew, opting to himself shoulder the camera so that Gyllenhaal and his young co-star, Judah Lewis, had space to strut their stuff.

"It was my first day of filming and the first time I'd met Jake," laughs Lewis. "They just put us in the house and said, 'Go nuts'. It was like, *really*? It was the funniest bonding experience – tearing down walls with sledgehammers >>



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THE HOUSE

and crowbars." He takes a deep breath, still not quite believing it actually happened. "It was one of the coolest things I've ever done. It's every boy's dream to just demolish stuff, and I got to live that. Everything in the house was real. The craziest bit for me was when I threw a crowbar across the room, straight into a flatscreen TV. It just *shattered*!"

"It was so much fun," laughs Gyllenhaal, who revelled in the opportunity to unleash his inner kid. And he wasn't the only one. "Everybody got into it. Jean-Marc ended up trashing pieces of the house himself. Everybody became the 12-year-old version of themselves."

Vallée was delighted with the destruction-footage he captured. Razing a house might have been a riot, but the pressure was immense. "It was a one-take deal because we didn't have two kitchens to destroy, we didn't have two extension-houses. At 'Action!' we started, and an hour later the house was demolished."

'TEARING DOWN WALLS WITH SLEDGEHAMMERS WAS ONE OF THE COOLEST THINGS EVER' JUDAH LEWIS

Appearing on the 2007 Blacklist of the best unproduced screenplays in Hollywood and remaining untouched for a further two years, Bryan Sipe's script was too daring, unpredictable and all-round WTF for an industry that likes to know exactly what it's dealing with. It tells the sad, wild, strangely thrilling story of Davis Mitchell, who loses his wife in a car crash and goes back to work at the firm of his father-in-law the next day, seemingly untouched and uncaring. But something is clearly not right, with Davis beginning to obsessively take things apart to see how they work, first little things like a coffee machine and then getting bigger until he finally attacks his beautiful house.

His tamped-down grief also finds an outlet when he starts penning complaint letters to the company that supplied the malfunctioning vending machine in the ER waiting room – it denied him a tasty snack while his wife was in theatre. These letters get progressively more raw and confessional until one night, at 2AM, he receives a phone call from a customer service rep, Karen, who's been moved by his outpouring. The pair strike up a tentative and peculiar friendship, and their dynamic is complicated still further by Karen's son Chris, a 15-year-old who looks like a 12-year-old yet smokes, swears and dresses like a '70s glam rock star.

In 2009, Sipe's screenplay was rescued when Black Label Media stepped in to finance it, and Mr. Mudd (*Ghost World*, *Juno*, *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower*) agreed to co-produce. They sent the script to Vallée, who at that point had just completed *Café De Flore* and was best known for Emily Blunt-starrer *The Young Victoria* and comedy-drama *C.R.A.Z.Y.* Vallée, it's safe to say, responded to the material.

"I read it and went, 'Oh my God, this is so beautiful,'" he says, voice thick with passion. "It explored loss and love. I related to things a lot. I too have at one point had a love in my life, forgotten to take care of it – I too was too busy trying to make a living, paying the bills. Too busy creating. And I forgot to enjoy my life. It was a script of rare quality. It makes you stop to think about how special and beautiful life can be. It was so unexpected and fresh and fun and irreverent and intelligent and deeply moving. I was laughing out loud. I was wondering where it was going. At the end, I felt very emotional."

For the roles of customer service rep Karen and father-in-law Phil, Vallée cast Naomi Watts and Chris Cooper, excellent choices both. But *Demolition* was always going to stand tall or collapse to the rubble dependent on who signed up for Davis and the attention-grabbing teen Chris; their relationship is the highlight of the film.

Gyllenhaal attached himself in 2014. By this point *Dallas Buyers Club* and *Wild* (two films that also deal with loss and love) had increased Vallée's stock considerably, winning Matthew McConaughey a Best Actor Oscar and scoring a Best Actress nomination from the Academy for Reese Witherspoon.

"I think, initially, it was the chance to work with Jean-Marc [*that attracted me*]," says Gyllenhaal. "I had heard he's very process-centric, and that just sounded like great fun. He runs up against your technique. I prefer to rehearse as much as possible, so he didn't want to rehearse. I have a feeling that if I'd said I didn't want to rehearse, he'd have said he wanted to rehearse. I don't think he's contradictory in nature; I just think he's trying to put you in an uncomfortable place. It's purely creative."

The script and character also held major appeal to Gyllenhaal. Given his performances in *Nightcrawler* and *Enemy*, it's not a surprise when he tells *Total Film* that he responds to "unconventional" material. But that's not the whole story – he also tentatively admits to making an emotional connection with Davis.

"It's not interesting to me [*to talk about personal connections*], not because of the 'sharing personal' thing... It's just that, somehow, when I share those things, then I lose the



Getting down: *Demolition* deals with a particular emotional state.





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Smashing: Davis Mitchell (Jake Gyllenhaal) hugs wife Julia (Heather Lind), sits with friend Karen (Naomi Watts, above left), takes direction from Jean-Marc Vallée (above right), and talks with father-in-law Phil (Chris Cooper, bottom left).

power of what the process was for me. But yeah, I had come out of... My grandpa had died, and there are people that I loved that I lost, and that is a piece of the journey for me. I've sort of used those things, but I can't really put that into words."

To play Chris, Vallée plumped for Judah Lewis, born and raised in LA, acting on stage since the age of four, in films since turning 10, and one of the last names in the hat for the rebooted *Spider-Man* before losing out to Tom Holland. Lewis landed the role without ever meeting his director or co-stars, first taping an audition and then Skyping with Vallée. Not that the process was easy; anything but. There's a great scene in *Demolition* where Chris cuts loose in his bedroom, dancing uninhibitedly to rock music turned up to 11. It was this scene that Vallée concentrated on during their Skype session.

"It was very important to Jean-Marc that I could dance," he explains. "He had a playlist of all these songs, completely different genres, and he would switch every 10 to 15 seconds. I had to dance! As a person I'm relatively shy, but I was so in character, I wasn't embarrassed at all – I just kind of went for it because my character would have gone crazy."

The joy of *Demolition* is that it wrong-foots viewers at every turn. When Mitchell starts penning complaint letters to the vending machine company, it seems like a technique to allow for exposition and interior monologue – and then Karen calls back and the narrative takes a screeching left turn. When Mitchell and the equally troubled Karen meet up, it seems certain that love and redemption will blossom – only Vallée and screenwriter Sipe know that life's not a movie. And when Chris first appears at the breakfast table with his child-like face screwed into a sullen pout, it seems he's just another movie teen – but he turns out to be one of the most complex creations since Jodie Foster's Iris in *Taxi Driver*. It's not so much the swearing, smoking and glam-rock outfits, affectations all to swaddle a wounded heart. It's not even the extraordinary scene (sure to be labelled downright irresponsible by some) in which Davis straps on a bulletproof vest and encourages Chris to shoot him point blank. No, it's Chris' frank wrestling with his sexual identity. It might be 2016 but US movies boasting A-list stars still shy away from such topics, and certainly don't treat them this confrontationally.

"It's a precious thing, because you're dealing with this kid, essentially, on set, and there are all these provocative things that you're doing," says Gyllenhaal. "We're pushing the limits there. But I don't believe in rules. I believe in respect. As long as there's joy in what you're doing, and as long as there's a connection and trust, then I think it can be fun. I mean, he's a wonderful young actor, very confident and very strong >>



Going up: Jake Gyllenhaal and director Jean-Marc Vallée prepare a shot and (below) Gyllenhaal and Judah Lewis relax.

with his choices. The most wonderful thing about working with a kid is that they're usually the ones showing you the more interesting choices. That was the case with him."

"I was a bit hesitant and my parents were, too," admits Lewis, who describes himself as a "goody two-shoes" in real-life. "There's a lot of content. That was a large conversation we had to have. It's a very explicit character. But in the end, it's not me. It's someone you're stepping into. The wardrobe helped. We looked at rock stars. David Bowie, Mick Jagger. One outfit I tried on was a full-bodied leotard, and I was like, 'Oh God!'" Lewis bites down his laughter, gets serious. "It was a character I really believed in. This kid is so brutally honest. He has a hard exterior and very soft interior."

Not for a second did Vallée, who opened *Dallas Buyers Club* with a raunchy threesome, shy away from the material. He in fact revelled in the opportunity to show a teenager who is "authentic" and an adult who has a "truthful relationship" with a teen rather that treating them like a child. Vallée immediately jumps to a conversation that Chris and Davis have in a hardware store – a scene that is arguably more shocking than the house being smashed to pieces or the bulletproof vest incident.

"He says, 'Hey, Davis, can I just say something? It's OK to tell the truth, right?' And Davis says, 'Yeah, it's my thing.' And Chris says, 'You think I'm gay?' That's such a beautiful moment. But I was careful when the kid says, 'Sometimes I imagine a dick in my mouth.' I didn't want the camera to be on the kid. It was too much. So I went on Jake, and you just hear it. You don't see him say that."

And Judah and his parents were OK with it? "Judah asked if I could cut it out," Vallée admits. "I said, 'I know it's a tough one, but I can't cut it out, man. This is what the scene is about. It's raw. It's a graphic image. But it'll be funny at the same time, and touching. It'll be funny *and* touching. So we've got to go there.' I told the parents and I told the kid, 'Ask yourself why you want to cut it out. Why are you afraid to say it? If you don't want to do it, we won't do it. But ask yourself why. The next day, Judah called me and said, 'I'll say it. I'm ready.'"

'THIS IS THE MOST ROCK AND ROLL FILM I'VE EVER MADE. IT'S ABOUT MAKING SOME NOISE!' **JEAN-MARC VALLÉE**

Demolition does not make for easy Friday night viewing but it's an exhilarating character study in which every character is damaged and all the more beautiful for it. Vallée welcomes the comparisons his new film has drawn to the spirit of *Fight Club* and, the closest fit, *American Beauty*.

"I like to say that this is the most rock and roll film I've ever made," he concludes. "It has the spirit of rock and roll. Rock and roll is to make noise; to be very, very loud; to use electric guitars and say to your parents, 'Fuck off!' and to say to the establishment, 'Fuck off!' When he demolishes his house, it's so rock and roll. You think of The Who, The Clash, where they're fucking destroying their instruments." He laughs. "What this film is about is making some noise." TF

***Demolition* open on 29 April.**

SMASHING IT

Total Film picks some of its favourite demolition jobs...

BATHROOM DOOR *THE SHINING (1980)*
The most iconic scene in an iconic film sees Jack Nicholson's insane caretaker Jack Torrance axe through a bathroom door to get at his cowering wife, Wendy (Shelley Duvall). The prop department initially made a thin door to help the actor, not realising he was a former fire marshall – his technique reduced the door to splinters and a thicker one was built.

CAR *CHRISTINE (1983)*
Twenty-eight Plymouth Furies were purchased and restored for the filming of John Carpenter's take on Stephen King's bestseller, such was the damage inflicted to (and inflicted by) the rampaging vehicle. The most memorable carnage is when Buddy Repperton's gang smash and slash Christine with bats, knives and sledgehammers. "It's not easy to rip up a car. These guys went at it," says Carpenter.

PIZZERIA *DO THE RIGHT THING (1989)*
The mob-handed destruction of Sal's pizzeria bring events to a fiery climax after the steady build-up of racial tensions in a Brooklyn neighbourhood over one sweltering day. The pizzeria was constructed on an empty car park, ready to be torn apart. Paramount backed out of the project because of the intensity of the finale, but Universal stepped in.

PRINTER *OFFICE SPACE (1999)*
Peter, Samir and Michael take their office printer outside and kick the shit out of it, then smash the remains with a baseball bat while Geto Boys' 'Still' blasts on the soundtrack ("Die muthafuckas, Die muthafuckas!"). Fox execs worried about using hip hop but the film achieved cult status and the track became an anthem to white-collar fury.

MIRROR *NIGHTCRAWLER (2014)*
Characters punching a mirror in anger is something of a cinematic trope, but normally it's planned and the glass isn't real and no harm is done. But Gyllenhaal, lost in his ghoulish character of crime photojournalist Louis Bloom after an 18-hour day, punched a real mirror with no forewarning. The result? On-screen intensity... And a real-life trip to ER to stem the bleeding. **JG**



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LAMITY JANE

Director Lynne Ramsay and stars Michael Fassbender, Bradley Cooper and Jude Law all bolted, but revenge western **Jane Got A Gun** refused to be dead and buried. Saddle up with Natalie Portman for the choppiest production of the year...

WORDS **KEVIN HARLEY**

How much pre-production chaos can a film handle before buckling? That question hovered in the air following the bustle of business surrounding Edgar Wright's split from *Ant-Man* – a test to Marvel's geek-plated resolve – but the MCU crisis was insect-sized compared to the heavy load of ill fortune lumped on *Jane Got A Gun*.

The Natalie Portman-starring siege western harboured great promise until day one of shooting, when director Lynne Ramsay didn't turn up for work: locked and loaded, with no one to shoot the damn thing. Then, like a game of *Buckaroo!* at its fraught climax, things got messier.

Whether you read the ensuing story as a tale of a free-radical indie director oppressed, reckless misbehaviour, mere rotten luck or a resolute producer's show-must-go-on heroism, it's easy to see why *JGAG* first got attention. The script by Brian Duffield (*Insurgent*) ranked highly on the Black List of top unproduced screenplays, and Ramsay's attachment made it more exciting still. *True Grit* aside, westerns remain a tricky sell for audiences, but the surprise employment of a visionary Scottish filmmaker behind the camera upped the intrigue for indie movie-watchers.

After the scuffed lyricism and art-pic smarts of her first two features, *Ratcatcher* (1999) and *Morvern Callar* (2002), Ramsay took nine years to make her third film, the devastating *We Need To Talk About Kevin* (2011) – so she's no bash-'em-out hack for hire. The prospect of arthouse royalty on genre turf tantalised. Add the May 2012 casting of Portman, a star packing popular appeal and critical kudos, and a picture of great promise emerged: a western loaded with depth, style and crossover clout. And a Ramsay film without the nine-year wait.

The plot showed promise, too. The heroine is Portman's homesteader Jane Hammond, whose outlaw husband returns home one day peppered with bullets after a run-in with a criminal gang. When the group track him down, intent on turning his near-death experience into a total-death one for him and his family, Jane turns to a gun-slinging ex-lover for help in the looming turf war.

Jane and gain

The phrase "bidding war" got bandied about when the agency CAA shopped *JGAG* around Cannes for financial help. The budget fell under $20m, so it had indie-wood integrity: Scott Steindorff's Scott Pictures stepped in to handle financing.

Portman's co-stars made the investment look a savvy one. Michael Fassbender signed to play her sharp-shooting ex in August 2012, a fine prospect: the man from *Shame* in a *Shane*-alike setting. Fresh from acclaim in Aussie psycho-noir *Animal Kingdom* (and, at the time, soon to be seen in Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty*), Joel Edgerton was cast as the lead criminal. Back-up came from Rodrigo Santoro, he of gold-undies infamy in the *300* films.

And then the musical chairs started, as *JGAG* underwent development delays. Time travel not being available to resolve scheduling conflicts, Fassbender's *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* ties forced him to drop out. The shift wasn't too calamitous: Edgerton moved to the hero/ex role and Jude Law looked like canny casting in Edgerton's villainous chaps, going by his *Nightcrawler*-ish bad 'un in Sam Mendes' *Road To Perdition*.

After delays, Monday 18 March 2013 was finally set for the start of shooting in Santa Fe. Then >>

calamity really struck: after nine months of development, and purportedly heated negotiations with Steindorff, Ramsay left the project the weekend before shooting. At 5.30am, the leads were on set – with no one to direct them.

How the west was saved

Whatever Ramsay's reasons were, Steindorff moved fast on damage control, keeping litigator Marty Singer close to hand. "I have millions of dollars invested, we're ready to shoot, we have a great script, crew and cast," he told entertainment portal *Deadline*.

"I'm shocked and so disappointed someone would do this to 150 crew members who devoted so much time, energy, commitment and loyalty to a project, and then have the director not show up," Steindorff protested. "It is insane somebody would do this to other people. I feel more for the crew and their families, but we are keeping the show going on, directors are flying in, and a replacement is imminent."

Make that very imminent. Two days after Ramsay departed, a replacement was named. Gavin O'Connor had directed Edgerton in cage-fighting dust-up *Warrior*; his other features included *Pride And Glory*, *Miracle* and *Tumbleweeds*. O'Connor drew further acclaim as an exec-producer of spouses'n'spies TV sizzler *The Americans* (he also helmed the pilot), so he brought a nose for grit and character. He also brought in Anthony Tambakis, *Warrior*'s co-writer, for a script polish.

Somehow, Steindorff had pulled off a coup: he'd got a rickety wagon of a film on trail after an unprecedented blow. True, there were casualties. *ƒGAG* swiftly became Jude Law-less: the star walked because he'd wanted to work with Ramsay. But the cloud had a silver lining, of the Oscar-nominated *Silver Linings Playbook* kind: Bradley Cooper replaced Law, bringing with him the right kind of indie/populist hybrid clout.

Rounding out a quality cast was Noah Emmerich, playing the husband turned into a human sieve by gunmen. Having worked for O'Connor in four films, as well as in *The Americans*, he treated the film's troubles with sanguine confidence: "It's a great cast, good script and beautiful story, and Gavin and Anthony made the script significantly better. Inside the bubble, it feels like we're just making a great Gavin O'Connor movie. Outside, there's all this chaos and people are talking, and the cast is changing and there is a high-wire act to keep it together. For us, from action to cut it feels not only normal, but really special."

'There's all this chaos and a high-wire act to keep it together. But from action to cut it feels really special' Noah Emmerich

Morale even held up when another curveball hit: within a month, Cooper flew the coop following scheduling conflicts with David O'Russell's dramedy *American Hustle*, a conflict exacerbated by the Boston bombing tragedy. "There was concern [*when he left*]," says Emmerich, "but also a sense of, we got through the director-not-showing-up crisis. We can handle the recasting of an actor."

If the list of rumoured replacements (Jake Gyllenhaal, Tom Hiddleston, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Tobey Maguire) suggested no one had lost their nerve, so did the final choice. Embracing his dark side, Ewan McGregor stepped into Cooper's boots. Meanwhile, deals were made off-set. After *ƒGAG*'s backers offered a good deal, Relativity Media and The Weinstein Company acquired the property for distribution. Gradually, a film that seemed to be haemorrhaging talent cauterised some of the wounds. "Now, we all think, we're in good hands," Emmerich commented. "Gavin O'Connor's hands. I've seen him do this before, he just makes it work."

Jane and pain

Further off-set, gossip sprayed like squibs in a Peckinpah stand-off. Rumours began that the backers were about to sue Ramsay for the return of a purported $750,000 in fees. A "civil complaint" included allegations that Ramsay "failed to provide the writing and directing services" contracted for, causing an "unreasonably delayed completion of a final budget for the Picture, and of the Picture itself".

The charges claimed Ramsay was "repeatedly under the influence of alcohol, abusive to members of the cast and crew and generally disruptive". And, allegedly: "[*She*] failed to adhere to proper safety protocol for handling weapons on set when she pointed a prop gun directly at a camera and, in turn, at the camera crew before first taking proper precautions."







Wild west: (far top left) Jane Hammond (Natalie Portman) asks ex-lover Dan Frost (Joel Edgerton) for help; (far bottom left) Colin McCann (Ewan McGregor); (below) Dan Frost has a job to do.

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Taking the hard road: Jane (Natalie Portman) must face her foes; (right) Fitchum (Rodrigo Santoro; (far right) Jane with husband Bill "Ham" Hammond (Noah Emmerich).

Ramsay's representatives replied swiftly. "Lynne Ramsay has not been served with this lawsuit," *The Hollywood Reporter* was told, "and, when she is, she will respond in court and not in the media. That said, the allegations as recently reported are simply false. Lynne looks forward to presenting the truth about this situation in the proper forum."

Outside that forum, press opinion differed. Sources told the *Hollywood Reporter* that Ramsay left because she was waiting to receive an approved schedule, script and budget as the shoot was about to start. Others claim that Ramsay wanted to maintain final cut in the event that these problems pushed her over-budget. The *Los Angeles Times* referred to contract disputes; *The Telegraph*, meanwhile, mentioned sources who claimed Ramsay had "personal issues" in London.

In the dust-storm, the truth looked blurry. Was Ramsay difficult, or a filmmaker with a vision sticking hard to her guns? Certainly her reputation for integrity goes before her: she left a proposed adaptation of Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* because, reportedly, producers wanted the film to be more faithful to the book. (Peter Jackson's adap followed.) Smartly, Portman's slant on Ramsay's departure favoured diplomacy. "I'm as mystified as I think everyone was, and it was pretty devastating," she told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "I mean, maybe she'll [*Ramsay*] speak to it one day. I don't know. I got there one week before we were supposed to start, in Santa Fe, and it seemed like there had been stuff going on that I had sort of been sheltered from. It was really, really difficult, and we were lucky that Gavin [*O'Connor*] came on so quickly. She [*Ramsay*] didn't come on [*set*]. I saw her the week before, but on the first day, no. I can only imagine something very difficult was going on for her, and it was devastating."





Loaded weapon

Then, incredibly, the fog cleared. In March 2014, *Screen Daily* was told by the parties involved, "Jane Got A Gun Production LLC and Lynne Ramsay announce the pending civil action and all other disputes between the parties associated with *Jane Got A Gun* motion picture have been resolved privately and to their mutual satisfaction."

Whether money was involved is unknown. Either way, the big question changed: from will this film survive, to will this film actually be good? People are rooting for *JGAG*; after all, even getting this far is impressive. After a postponed release, the first images emerged last year, and it finally opened in the US – to mixed reviews and disappointing numbers – in January. A UK release is earmarked for spring.

Edgerton was always confident that *JGAG* had a fighting chance. "What is going to be hopefully the most fantastic conclusion to the whole stumbling, falling, riding itself process of making that movie, is that I think it's gonna be fantastic," he told the movie website *Collider*. "We forged a great movie out of fire... It was a difficult situation, but the result of all those difficulties and hardships along the way has been remarkable... I'm really, really proud of it, and I needed to be proud of it, because we worked so hard to keep that thing from falling over."

Or, if you run with Emmerich's comparison, keep it from sinking: "I keep telling people, 'Remember *Titanic*?'" he says. "Everybody said, 'It's over, the tank's not working, the budget's booming, who cares about a boat that sinks...' And it became the most successful movie ever made. My mantra is, 'Remember *Titanic*.' We're much more on the radar because all that has happened. Otherwise, we'd be a smallish independent movie."

Jane finally has her gun. And, as the dust settles, we can't wait to see how she uses it. TF

***Jane Got A Gun* opens 22 April.**

FROM WORKING WITH MENDES AND SPIELBERG TO SMASHING IT IN THE HUNGER GAMES AND TRANSFORMERS, STANLEY TUCCI

HAS ALWAYS IMPRESSED OVER A 30-YEAR CAREER. NOW ENJOYING RAVES FOR SPOTLIGHT AND WITH PANDEMIC THRILLER PATIENT ZERO READY TO GO VIRAL, THE STAR HAS A MESSAGE FOR HOLLYWOOD: "DON'T THEY KNOW? I'M A LUCKY CHARM!"

WORDS **JAMES MOTTRAM** PORTRAIT **CAMERA PRESS / JAMIE BAKER**

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Stanley Tucci shoots *Total Film* a quizzical look. The question is simple: does Tucci have a dark side? "Yes!" he grins. "Do you want to see it?" But 31 years since he made his debut as a "glorified extra" in *Prizzi's Honor*, the chameleonic Tucci has arguably already shown it. That's what a decade of playing hoods in TV shows like *Wiseguy* and *Miami Vice* and movies such as *Men Of Respect* and *Billy Bathgate* (as Lucky Luciano) will do for you – the fate that befell Tucci in his early days.

Raised in New York, the son of a secretary and an art teacher, Tucci majored in acting at SUNY Purchase then quickly found himself pigeonholed by his Italian-American roots, surname and looks. This was true even in commercials, as shown in a mid-'80s Levis 501 spot (still on YouTube, he'll be delighted to know) as he swaggers down the sidewalk in a white vest-top. Today, in a crisp white shirt and slacks, the 55-year-old looks exactly like the Tucci we've known on screen for the past 20-odd years: bald, brown-eyed, roguish twinkle.

Tucci's career only morphed after his 1996 directorial debut feature, *Big Night*. He co-directed with fellow actor Campbell Scott, his friend from high-school whose mother, actress Colleen Dewhurst, once helped Tucci and Scott get their equity cards by squeezing them into a Broadway play she was starring in. Coinciding with his role as the billionaire philanderer Richard Cross in TV drama *Murder One*, it was Tucci's turn as a wide-eyed immigrant restaurant manager in *Big Night* that changed everything.

All of a sudden, he got what every actor craves: choice. He won Golden Globes for playing real-life figures in serious TV dramas like *Winchell* and *Conspiracy*. He did outright comedy, in Woody Allen's *Deconstructing Harry*, *The Daytrippers* and his second movie as director,





'I CAN'T WALK DOWN THE STREET SINCE THE HUNGER GAMES. I CAN'T VISIT MY KIDS' SCHOOL!'

the Laurel and Hardy-inspired slapstick tale *The Imposters*. But it was as the new millennium began, and Tucci hit his 40s, that his reputation as an all-rounder really blossomed.

Nominated for a Tony for the 2002 Broadway revival of Terrence McNally's *Frankie And Johnny In The Clair De Lune*, Tucci's time with the big guns arrived: Mendes (*Road To Perdition*), Spielberg (*The Terminal*), Jackson (*The Lovely Bones*, which gained him an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor). He segued into franchises – *The Hunger Games*, *Captain America* and *Transformers* in an eye-blink. And throughout all, he continued directing – with his fifth movie, *Final Portrait*, with Geoffrey Rush, now in production.

From his recent lawyer in *Spotlight* to upcoming roles in *Blue Angel*, *Beauty And The Beast* and, firstly, pandemic thriller *Patient Zero*, Tucci has remained one of America's most diverse performers – even if he no longer remains in America, now living in London with second wife Felicity, sister to Emily Blunt. Somehow he seems to have absorbed British humour in his short time here: a sandpaper-dry wit smooths over his every sentence – especially when he takes us to his dark side.

It's been a remarkable 12 months for you – with perhaps *Spotlight* the biggest highlight...
I was thrilled to be involved. I was thrilled because I love Tom [*McCarthy*] and I just think he's such a good writer, director, actor – everything, everything. And I was always sad that I was never in any of his movies. So I was literally thrilled when I was asked.

Are you Catholic?
I was raised Catholic. A totally lapsed Catholic. Even when I was going to church – I stopped going to church in high school – but even when I was going to church, you're listening to it. And this is just me. I just didn't believe it. I didn't get it. It was abstract. It was dogmatic. Everything is black-and-white, and the world just isn't that way. And how could one religion be right and another religion be wrong? It doesn't make any sense!

Did you ever come back to religion in any way?
No. I'm not religious. I think it's caused more

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Paper man: as attorney Mitchell Garabedian, opposite Mark Ruffalo in *Spotlight*.

trouble than anything. You should be able to practise whatever religion you want to practise. Go ahead. Just don't impose it upon me.

Tom says Catholics have called the film, which deals with the unearthing of sexual abuse within the church, very fair...

It is fair, because it just tells the story – here's the story, this is what happened. How can that not be fair? To me it does exactly what the reporters did, which is: "Here's the story, this is what happened, you make the judgement." You don't have to condemn them. They condemn themselves, simply by us knowing their actions.

***Spotlight* aside, you've been on something of a roll this past year...**

I filmed *Spotlight* October/November 2014. *Patient Zero* was March into April; then I did a thing for ITV, a *Peter Pan* retelling [Peter & Wendy] where I play multiple characters, and then I did *Beauty And The Beast* for about five days.

Are you in scenes with Emma Watson and Dan Stevens' Beast?

We're all in the big ballroom thing. I was with Audra McDonald and Ewan McGregor and that was fun.

What about zombie movie *Patient Zero*? You shot in glamorous Dagenham, right?

Yes... I'd never been to Dagenham. That was a weird place [*where we shot*]: an old pharmaceutical factory. It was a cool space. You could do a lot in the space. It was just a shame it was sitting there abandoned.

Did the role require you to get in shape?

I'm always in shape! Yeah, I like the physicality of it. I like physical stuff so that was part of it. I did the same workout I've done for 36 years! I used to lift more weights. Now I do very light weights, a lot of my own body weight, and some yoga – stuff like that. I gotta do it. I like to eat too much!

Is diversity something you always strive for in your roles?

I love it. To me that's the whole point of it. I don't want to keep doing the same thing all the time. To me it was a really fun year – to be able to do *Patient Zero* which was really weird and dark and to work with Stefan [*Ruzowitzky*], who I think is a great director. Then go do the ITV thing and play Captain Hook – which is the only role that any actor ever wants to play, let's face it. I was Hook and Mister Darling, and the surgeon, Dr. Wylie, who operates on the girl because it's contemporary and goes into her fantasy.

Do you enjoy playing more flamboyant characters, like Caesar Flickerman in *The Hunger Games*?

I love it, I love it... It's great to do that stuff and then to do something like *Spotlight* or to go and do a movie like I'm about to do which is *Blue Angel*, which Richard Levine is directing. We're shooting in New York, based on a book by Francine Prose about a college professor and his sort of liaison he has with a young girl and what happens, dealing with the fallout from the institution's point of view. It's a really interesting script.

Do you enjoy the genre/blockbuster world when you dip into it?

Yeah... They're not movies I used to watch. But they're more prevalent now and they're interesting. Look at *The Hunger Games* – it's a really quite moving, beautiful, tragic story but the scope of the thing, visually, is stunning.

Have you been pursued by teenage fans since *The Hunger Games*?

Yeah, it is weird! I can't go visit my kids' school!

Is that true?

They go crazy. With *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Hunger Games* and now *Transformers*... Oh my god, I can't walk down the street! London is better, Italy is really tough and New York, forget about it. In Rome I couldn't walk down the street. I've made so many movies at this point, I've just inundated and flooded the market with sheer volume [*starts to laugh*]... It's quantity not quality!

Would you consider another Marvel movie?

Oh my God, I would do it in a second. Again, *Captain America* was one of the best experiences and I also made great friends. Hayley Atwell, Dominic Cooper, Chris Evans, who I adore. It was so much fun.

>>

FIVE STAR TURNS

SUPER STANLEY...

1



THE TERMINAL 2004 ★★★

Ask Tucci why he's frequently cast as authority figures, and he'll tell you it's because he's "incredibly smart and gets frustrated really easily." Small wonder he was ideal to play Frank Dixon, the uptight pen-pusher out to make Tom Hanks' life as difficult as possible in Spielberg's illegal immigrant comedy.

2



THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2006 ★★★★

Nigel Kipling, waspish gay aide to Meryl Streep's fashion gorgon, might have been a camp caricature. Yet Tucci tapped into a rich seam of need, especially when recalling Nigel's past as "a boy from Rhode Island pretending to go to soccer practice when he was really going to sewing class."

3



THE LOVELY BONES 2009 ★★★

Having fathered three children with late wife Kathryn, Tucci understandably balked at playing a serial child murderer. His solution was to steep the creepy George Harvey in bland, unprepossessing normality. "The goal was to be bad, but human," he says. "We created him as a real person, not a monster."

4



THE HUNGER GAMES 2012-2015 ★★★★

With his flamboyant outfits, outrageous hair and a smile as false as his tan, it's hardly surprising Tucci regards Caesar Flickerman, the oleaginous emcee who presides over Panem's gladiatorial entertainments, as "a Vegas act on steroids". "You don't have to do much acting once you put all that stuff on," he admits.

5



SPOTLIGHT 2015 ★★★★

Playing Mitchell Garabedian, dogged defender of victims of priestly molestation, was almost an act of atonement for Tucci after his Oscar-nominated turn in *Bones*. "Here was the quintessential little guy, fighting the big institution," he marvels. "The fact he stuck with it is a great testament to his fortitude." **NS**

REX

What about *Star Wars* – would you be keen for *Episode VIII*, maybe?
They haven't asked. Don't they know? I'm a lucky charm!
Has your career always been this eclectic?
It's totally random. At first, when I started out in the business, because you're dark or Italian, you're always cast as the bad guy. This is the 1980s...
Was this in *Prizzi's Honor*, which you featured in?
Yeah, but I wasn't even in it. I was like an extra in it. I was supposed to have one line but they cut it out.
That's outrageous! Didn't they realise who you were?
If they only knew! So, it was a lot of that sort of Mafioso bad guy, sleazy guy, because you're dark. It's that simple... And that was irritating. But if you could be funny, then you could be funny and sleazy... That was one of the reasons I started making my own films, too. I wanted to tell stories, and I wanted to do more than just wait around for somebody to give me a job. And I was always interested when I was on set or in a play, in the thing as a whole. To watch. And I learnt a great deal from watching directors and cinematographers and the whole thing coming together.
So what changed things for you?
TV stuff changed things for me. *Murder One* really changed things for me because people saw me in a different way. And the one thing I asked [*creator*] Stephen Bochco, who is so great... I said: "The only thing, can I just ask, if he is the killer" – which I never knew – "can he not be Italian and no connection to the Mafia?" And he said, "Of course, no problem." I think that made a big difference because he was just a person without an Italian surname, and that made a big difference.
Was that the first gay character you played?
Was the character gay in that? I don't know. It was ambiguous. We never knew. And I'll tell you, we never knew. You never knew what you were doing, any day, on that show. But I think he had been sexually promiscuous but maybe he was bisexual. It was never specific. He was dying of AIDS but a reason was never given.

How important are your Italian roots?
It's everything to me. I was raised in an Italian-American household. I lived in Florence when I was young for a year. I go back to Italy as much as possible. I've worked there a number of times and I love it. Obviously Italian food is the upmost. I've never worked with any contemporary Italian directors, but I'm a huge fan of Rossellini, Pasolini, Fellini... Any 'ini'!
You've played many nationalities now...
Yeah, yeah, but it's different now... Italians are viewed differently now.
In what way have things changed? Has the whole Mafiosi image disappeared?
No, we still imagine a lot of them are Mafiosi, when in fact the exact opposite is true. But it's very entertaining. [*Tucci's* Spotlight *co-star*] Mark Ruffalo is the perfect example, really, if you think about it. He looks what we would consider Italian and he has an Italian surname, but Mark plays everything. It didn't used to be that way. And he doesn't just play urban people or uneducated, which was always the role of the Italian. You'll see people have Italian surnames now in movies and they're the teacher or they're the doctor.



'THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT THE WAY PETER JACKSON CONSTRUCTED THE LOVELY BONES'

You did go back to that gangster world in Sam Mendes' *Road To Perdition*, shortly before you worked with Steven Spielberg on *The Terminal*. How much did you learn from those guys?
You always learn something from somebody, and they're both incredible directors. Sam is really wonderful – a wonderful guy and a hell of a director. His eye is stunning. And Steven's mind is so agile; he is cinema. He only thinks in terms of cinema. I've never seen anybody think so quickly or be so fragile in understanding the workings of cinema. It was pretty amazing to be on that set. He'd make this stuff up as you went along. I don't know how he did it.
After working with those guys, you got an Oscar nomination for playing a killer in Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones*. How was that?
I knew it would be painful, and I can't read books or see movies in which children are harmed. I never wanted to play a serial killer. But this wasn't really a serial killer movie. Pete [*Jackson*] – there's something poetic and magical about the way he constructed it, which is not an easy thing to do.
You touched earlier on *The Devil Wears Prada*. How did the fashion world react to your character, the art director at a high-fashion magazine?
Somebody in the fashion world said to me, "I really liked what you did but you were still too nice!" Now that's scary.
Had you had much contact with that industry?
A little bit. Only because when you're a little bit famous, people give you clothes and ask you to fashion shows and all that stuff – and that's nice. I wish they had done it when I couldn't afford the clothes.
You now live in London. What attracted you to move there?
My wife, she's British. I love it. I've been there a couple of years.



LIFELINE

11 NOVEMBER 1960
Born in Peekskill, New York, son of an art teacher and writer.

1982-1985
Acts on Broadway before moving into film with a small role in *Prizzi's Honor*.

1995-1996
Serves up a tasty directorial debut in family restaurant-drama *Big Night*. Critics salivate.



1998-2001
Wins two Emmys and two Golden Globes for TV work *Winchell*, *Monk* and *Conspiracy*.

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More than a man: creating a super soldier in *Captain America: The First Avenger*.

Has it changed your work pattern in any way?
I think the options are greater. There's so much stuff shooting in London, so much stuff shooting in Europe. Not as many movies are being made in LA. Look at how many of the huge movies are being shot in London. *Beauty And The Beast*, *Star Wars*... We shot the first *Captain America* there. It's like a film mecca. It's incredible how much stuff is going on, the studios that are being built, good tax breaks, incredible infrastructure, great crews, everyone speaks the same language. Plus you can bring actors over from Europe and they're not flying people thousands of miles.

Did you prefer making indies to blockbusters?
I happen to love some big stupid blockbuster movies. They're fun – there's room for everything. There is something to be said for a healthy mix of both of them. As soon as we can get to a point where movies are not so expensive to market... If we can go backwards in that regard, it would be a really, really great thing. I think that's the thing that's killing independent film.

You're about to direct again, with *Final Portrait*, about the Swiss painter and sculptor Alberto Giacometti. What got you into that subject?
I love Giacometti, I'm so interested in him, I've always been interested in Giacometti for 20-something years. My dad was an art teacher and so I was brought up in a world of art, and learning about art. And Giacometti really just struck a chord with me. And this is based on a book called *The Giacometti Portrait* by James Lord, who was his friend and biographer. I got the rights to it about 13 years ago from James, wrote the script about 10 years ago. It's a short shoot. Five weeks. I almost was going to do it in four, but I couldn't do it. We're building Giacometti's studio, and we'll do some locations, cheat some locations in London for Paris, and probably go to Paris just for a few days.

How has the industry changed since you last directed on 2007's *Blind Date*?
Oh my God, it's much harder to get money now. It used to be easier. People were willing to take chances, there were smaller distributors; it's changed distinctly. It's very sad. We made *Big Night*, 15 years ago, for $4.3m, and I'll make the Giacometti movie for a little more than that. And we've got big stars. *Big Night*, Minnie Driver was the biggest star we had.

Shortly after *Big Night*, you made *The Impostors* and *Joe Gould's Secret* – but since then you've made only one film in 15 years. What happened?
I stopped directing after *Joe Gould's Secret*. I was very disappointed in the way it was distributed and plus [*with late wife Kate, who died in 2009*] I had three children in that span of seven years. So it was too hard to do that – raise three children and work as an actor, which is how I make my money. Because you don't make money directing.

What happened with *Joe Gould's Secret*?
They dumped it. The company just dumped it. It was made by another company and then they took over that company as it was about to be distributed. They brought in their own movies. This was of no interest to them! It was horrible, horrible. And I didn't known how upset I was about it until a while afterwards. I was initially upset, but then you're just so fucking tired from doing the press, so you think, 'OK, we'll let it go.' But it was only about six months afterwards that I realised how upsetting it was, because you spend so much time working on it. Someone had sent me the script, and I took months to rewrite the script and you make it for not a lot of money – and there were these incredible performances, particularly by Ian Holm. It was an amazing performance. See it just for that performance – it was beautiful. And then the thing gets dumped because of some business decision, and it kills you. So I was very put off.

What keeps you going in situations like that?
You just have to tell these stories. You just feel like you have to tell stories. I stopped for seven years; I thought, 'I can't do this. I need to wait until I want to do this again.' Acting I can do. But directing and writing, it takes so much out of you. And you have to really want to tell those stories, regardless of what those stories are. But you have to keep plugging away at it and hope you find some lunatic who will give you the money.

Is there anything you still want to do in your career?
Oh my God, yes. Poirot! Come on! It's a great role. They're beautifully written books and it's such an interesting role. David Suchet did it so brilliantly, but the great thing about this role is that it can be interpreted again and again and again. TF

***Spotlight* is out now. *Patient Zero* opens on 2 September. *Beauty And The Beast* opens in 2017.**

STANLEY TUCCI

2004-2006
Foe to Tom Hanks in *The Terminal* and right-hand man to Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada*.



2009-2010
Follows up first Oscar nom for *The Lovely Bones* by lending his voice to *Space Chimps 2: Zartog Strikes Back*.

2013-2014
In his 50s, starts landing franchises: the *Hunger Games: Catching Fire* and *Transformers: Age Of Extinction*.



2015-2016
Closes out *HG* franchise with *Mockingjay – Part 2*, excels as a flustered, driven lawyer in *Spotlight*.

Updating...



92%

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NEW LOOK OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE ON SALE 8 APRIL

CONTENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. BEYOND ALL RECOGNITION.

EDITED BY
MATTHEW LEYLAND

The Total Film home entertainment bible

Lounge

★★★★★ Enlightening
★★★★ Intelligent design
★★★ Not as daft as it looks
★★ Brain freeze
★ Plain stoopid

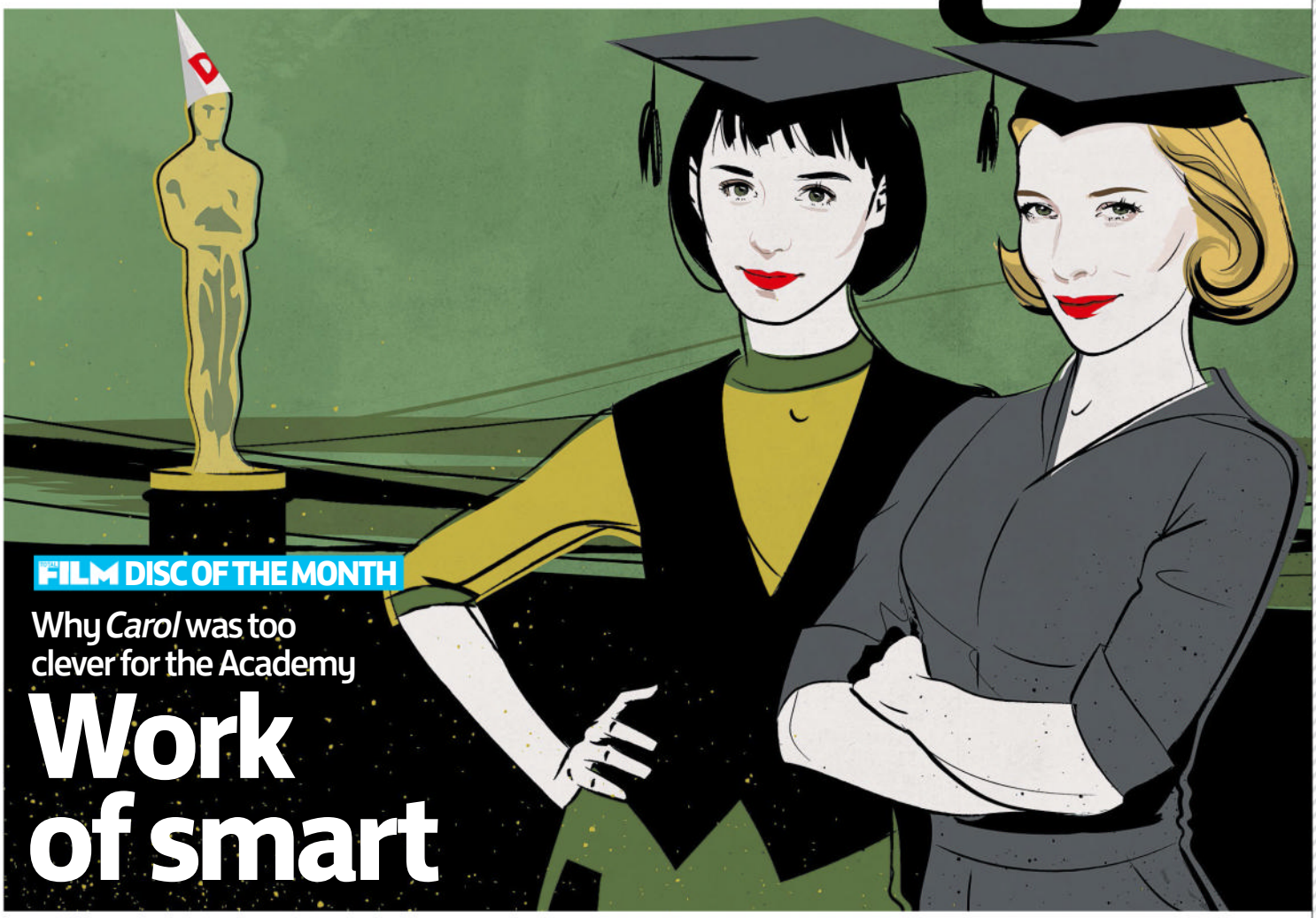


ILLUSTRATION BY LIZZY THOMAS

TOTAL FILM DISC OF THE MONTH

Why *Carol* was too clever for the Academy

Work of smart

NEW RELEASES 11.03.16 – 07.04.16

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Alienate	★★	p131
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Audition	★★★★★	p132
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Classic Scene: *Die Hard*	p144

N/A Extras not available at time of going to press

Eye up *The Good Dinosaur* on p129





Wronged women

The best picture not nommed for Best Picture...

CAROL 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 21 MARCH DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD



AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF this year's Academy Awards nominees, a howl of protest greeted the absence, for the second year, of a single actor of colour in the 20 positions available. But while the Oscars' diversity problem was rightly given the podium and #OscarsSoWhite filled timelines on Twitter, another injustice – a great deal lesser, certainly, but still worth noting – slipped by. Namely that *Carol*, the exquisite, heartrending LGBT drama by Todd Haynes, whose earlier *Far From Heaven* (2002) explored race relations within the formal framework of a Douglas Sirk melodrama, failed to register a Best Picture or Director nomination.

It's not, of course, the first time that such a wrong has been committed by the Academy. Quite the opposite: this 6,000-strong body comprising primarily white males with a median age of 63 is so prolific in its misjudgements that it's hard to know where to begin (though in keeping with the #OscarsSoWhite theme, how about Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* being overlooked for a Best Picture or Director nom at the 1990 awards?). But given the deserved critical adulation that has buoyed *Carol* since its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in May – and given the rule-change implemented in 2009 that saw the Academy double down on its options by allowing up to 10 nominations in the Best Picture category – *Carol*'s shut-out is all the more inexplicable.

Class in a glass

Based on Patricia Highsmith's novel *The Price Of Salt* (first published in 1952 under the pseudonym Claire Morgan), Haynes' adap casts a never-better Cate Blanchett as Carol Aird, a married New York socialite who falls for shop assistant Therese Belivet (Rooney Mara). This being 1952, their love is illicit, further complicated by chasms in age and class. Carol's transgressive desire even threatens to lose her custody of her infant daughter to cuckolded husband Harge (Kyle Chandler).

But Haynes' movie, despite its title, is as much Therese's story as Carol's. A would-be photographer, this initially watchful and submissive young woman comes into focus before our eyes, starting the film blank and then developing colour and complexity. Her journey finds physical representation in a road trip west, with the America of Edward Hopper

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Forbidden love: Rooney Mara and Cate Blanchett sensitively tackle the romance and feeling of a charged relationship.

'The style just adds to the ache, with every object, surface and item of clothing charged with eroticism'

and Vladimir Nabokov visible through steamed windows as Carol and Therese's repressed desire is finally granted expression within the cocoons of cars and motels. Having previously been shot behind panes of glass or in reflection or on opposite sides of the frame with their figures held stiffly in place by Sandy Powell's immaculate costumes, the women at last melt and meld: a love scene is tellingly choreographed in such a way that it is hard to establish which limbs belongs to which woman.

Oftentimes when a film is this sumptuously crafted in all departments, from Ed Lachman's soft photography and Judy Becker's elegant production design to Carter Burwell's lush, melancholy score (the soloing clarinet and oboe interweave as the lives of Carol and Therese entwine), the style can hijack the picture. Here it just adds to the ache, with every object, surface and item of clothing charged with eroticism. As with Wong Kar-wai's swooning tale of extra-marital passion *In The Mood For Love*, form and content are one, and the cumulative power of all this thrilling detail hits hard in the final scenes.



Down to earth

Unless, it seems, you belong to the Academy. Perhaps members took *Carol*'s nomination for granted and voted elsewhere, such has been the universal acclaim, or perhaps the twin nods for the terrific leading ladies (Mara, bizarrely, in the Supporting category) was considered generous enough. More likely, sadly, is that the aforementioned male dominance (76 per cent!) in the Academy's make-up came into play – it can't be a coincidence that Haynes, an exponent of female-driven stories (*Safe*, *Far From Heaven*, *Mildred Pierce*), has never received a Director or Picture nomination.

The on-disc extras grant some love but not enough. Thirty-five minutes of behind-the-scenes footage is arranged into chapters focusing on first Blanchett, then Mara, Haynes, writer Phyllis Nagy (who knew Highsmith for the last 10 years of her life and thus felt a "burden of responsibility to just not screw it up"), Lachman, Becker, Powell and Burwell. There's overlap but plenty of insight too, with Haynes pointing to the universality of the love story (hear that, Academy?), producer Christine Vachon identifying *Carol*'s "hyper-reality mixed with hyper-cinematic fantasy and beauty", and both Powell and Becker pointing out that 1952 belongs to the "post-war '50s" and not the "Eisenhower '50s". Meaning? *Carol* is drop-dead gorgeous to look at but its beauty is earthy and besmirched, with the action shot in Super 16mm and painted in neutral colours and greens and dirty pinks to keep things grounded.

The only other extra is a dip into five Q&As conducted in US cities when Haynes and co. toured the movie. Much passion and eloquence is on display, with Mara pinpointing that it's not only teenagers who undergo rites-of-passage: "*Carol* is a beautiful coming-of-age story for both women at very different points in their lives," she says. Maybe it's not too late for the Academy to learn lessons and do some growing, too.

Jamie Graham

EXTRAS › **Featurette** › **Q&A highlights**



The iFloor was one of Jobs' less successful innovations.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE 2008
In which Boyle proves his rocket-boosted style can energise anything: in this case, a TV quiz show.

THE SOCIAL NETWORK 2010
Sorkin's tech-age predecessor/sequel brings dramatic bite to a tale of bytes.

JOBS 2013
The same story in more conventional cradle-to-the-grave fashion. Kutcher's a dead ringer for Steve, though.

Mac daddy

All hard drive, nothing floppy...

STEVE JOBS 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DIGITAL HD **21 MARCH** DVD, BD



DID THE WORLD REALLY NEED another film about the titular Apple guru so soon after the Ashton Kutcher-starring biopic? Does cinema require Aaron Sorkin to pen a second look at the information age? Well, here's the thing. Did anybody really need another computer? Steve Jobs thought so, and worked tirelessly to refine his ideas into increasingly elegant, compact shapes.

Steve Jobs the film does much the same (ahem) job, as Sorkin updates his tech-Shakespeare software, Danny Boyle provides the fast-paced processing power and an ace cast adds enhanced features. Over three milestones in Jobs' career, the story of the kingpin-turned-scapegoat-turned-prodigal son reveals a classical anti-hero, a walking (and talking) Shakespearian flaw.

Here, the irony is that where Jobs is brittle, arrogant and detached – "poorly made," as he puts it – he's seeking to create something flawless. Inevitably, echoes of *The Social Network* resound. Like Mark Zuckerberg, Jobs (Michael Fassbender) is driven beyond typical ethical standards, trampling over the talents of others to fulfil his self-belief in being the conductor who plays the orchestra. The reputational rise and fall is mirrored in the hero's relationship with a woman: in this case Lisa, the daughter Jobs grudgingly comes to accept as his own. Much of the dialogue feels like a self-parody of Sorkin's style. (Discussing why Lennon stood out in the Beatles, Jobs proclaims, "He was John because he was John.")

Yet Sorkin isn't dealing with anything too zeitgeisty; the story here ends in 1998, prior to the creation of the iPod and five years before Facebook. Accordingly, the film lacks original potential director David Fincher's modernity – but Boyle, once a veteran of the writer-led British TV industry, is an apt replacement. This is a deliberately theatrical throwback in three acts that swirls with ideas of form and function (not least Boyle's clever decision to shoot the sequences in, respectively, 16mm, 35mm and digital).

Inevitably, though, Sorkin and Boyle can't sit still. The stage isn't big enough for these guys, so Jobs prowls its margins; an agitated perfectionist flitting between dressing rooms, backstage areas and the corridors in between. Vivid editing sees Jobs assailed by put-upon employees, frustrated bosses and Lisa's mother. When doubts do flicker in, the film cross-cuts flashbacks with venomous power: the stand-out moment is a parallel argument between Jobs and (ex-)boss John Sculley (Jeff Daniels), past and present colliding like gunfire.

The acting must be agile in action and thought to deliver this, and a cast attracted by a director/screenwriter dream team is happy to oblige. Daniels, Michael Stuhlbarg and Seth Rogen are a Greek chorus of critics, while Kate Winslet tries to bring schoolmarmish order to proceedings. But it's Fassbender who excels, his prowling intensity an interesting companion to his recent Macbeth. Here, too, is a man who would be king, except this time he's also providing the prophecy. The 45-min Making Of devotes a good chunk to the actors' process (and prowess); as for the separate Boyle/Sorkin commentaries, wouldn't it have been more fun to get them riffing in the same room? **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries (BD)** › **Making Of**

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Jurassic whirl

Not Pixar perfect.

He really needed to floss.

THE GOOD DINOSAUR PG



Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 21 MARCH DVD, BD, 3D, DIGITAL HD

BLAME THE MUCH-publicised production difficulties, which resulted in its release being postponed by 18 months. Or blame *Star Wars* hype drowning out everything else at the time. Either way, *The Good Dinosaur* is the first Pixar film that might reasonably be deemed a box-office flop. And yet, while it might be the studio's weakest-performing movie, it's far from its worst.

It's set in a hypothetical reality in which the extinction-level meteor that originally wiped out the dinos instead misses Earth, allowing T-rex and co to evolve over millions of years. We meet Arlo, the runt of a dino-litter in a family of dino-farmers. When tragedy strikes, our four-legged hero finds himself scared and miles from home with only Spot, a human boy evolved to the point of being a loyal, loveable dog-like pet, for some company.

The Good Dinosaur compares unfavourably to its predecessor *Inside Out*, released earlier in 2015, opting for broad strokes and simplicity where that film explored an incredibly sophisticated concept. While the deliberately cartoonish caricatures and unfussy storytelling are just as appealing as Pixar's more mature offerings, it does leave the film a tad self-conflicted, with unhinged predators, a somewhat psychologically dubious Styracosaurus and one out-of-place trippy drug sequence confusing the otherwise family-friendly tone.

Where *The Good Dinosaur* shines brightest is the friendship between Arlo and Spot, set against a backdrop of stunning vistas and glowing with trademark Pixar poignancy. Extras explore the film's use of artistic license ("dinosaurs never spoke") and tight production schedule. There's also a research trip to a cattle ranch, 11 mins of deleted scenes (animated storyboards, essentially) and Oscar-nominated short *Sanjay's Super Team*.

Matt Looker

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Short** › **Deleted scenes (BD)** › **Featurettes (BD)**



INFINITELY POLAR BEAR 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD

EXECUTIVE-PRODUCED BY J.J. Abrams and starring a Golden Globe-nominated Mark Ruffalo, this small-scale '70s-set dramedy is about as far removed from The Avengers as you can get (even if there's a little Hulk in Ruffalo's manic-depressive character). He plays Cam Stuart, a bipolar sufferer struggling to raise his two daughters in the absence of wife Maggie (Zoe Saldana). From the moment we see him sitting cross-legged on the grass in his pants, Ruffalo is an engaging, unpredictable presence. But writer/director Maya Forbes lets the final act drift aimlessly, leading to a shoulder-shrugging, ho-hum finale.

James Mottram

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Q&A** › **Deleted scenes**



HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2 U

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★★☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, 3D, DIGITAL HD

IT WAS HARD TO IMAGINE anyone screaming for a sequel, but *Hotel Transylvania 2* raked in almost half a billion dollars at the box office, suggesting there's plenty of life in the (re)animated franchise yet. Picking up right where the original left off, *HT2* sees Adam Sandler's Count Dracula adjusting to life as a 'Vam-pa' to his half-human grandson. The formula's virtually unchanged, with the voice cast still populated by Sandler's *Grown Ups* cohorts, but a steady stream of gags just about holds the attention. Extras are solid half-term fodder plus two(?!) commentary tracks. **Matt Maytum**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries** › **Deleted scenes (BD)** › **Featurettes (BD)** › **Sketch gallery** › **Music video**

Blu news

Non-*Star Wars* exclusives ahoy!



Sibling revelry

This might sound hard to believe, but there were other films out in the cinema in winter that didn't contain the words 'Force' or 'Awakens'. And they're all about to land on home-ent, so you can see what you did – or in some cases didn't – miss. There's Tina Fey/Amy Poehler party-com *Sisters* (25 April), which comes to Blu-ray in an extended cut. Then we've got festive frightener *Krampus* (25 Apr), body/buddy horror *Victor Frankenstein* (11 April) and Seth Rogen and chums having a bleary Christmas in *The Night Before* (28 March). Meanwhile, Brad and Ang comfortingly reveal that the super-beautiful can have crap holidays too in *By The Sea* (18 April).



Lens flair

Over in retro-land, BFI is going big on the daddy of Brit-grit, Alan Clarke: in conjunction with a season at the South Bank, 23 May will see the release of two six-DVD box sets (including Clarke's most famous work *Scum*), plus standalone Blu-rays of Gary Oldman starrer *The Firm* and *Penda's Fen*, which has never been released on any video format. Something that has been released on every video format, but is now getting the full Eureka treatment, is *Man With A Movie Camera*, often hailed as the greatest doc of all time (not including the *Jackass* movies, we presume). A dual-format four-discer arrives 18 April.



James (Christopher Abbott) tends to terminally ill mother Gail (Cynthia Nixon).

Problem child

Coming-of-ager grows into something special...

JAMES WHITE 15



Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

OUT NOW DVD

WE KICK OFF WITH A BLAST of discordant noise as James White (*Girls*' Christopher Abbott) stumbles drunkenly through a disco-blaring nightclub and out into a New York morning. The camera tracks back with him, holding in tight close-up on his sweaty, bleary face, telling us that this is a guy wholly wrapped up in his own immature, irresponsible self. Yet before the film's hit the end credits we'll see him tenderly cradling his terminally cancer-stricken mother in his arms, soothing her with a tale of the blissful future as a beloved grandma that she'll never live to know: "See me happy. See me as a father... See me smile to see you so happy."

Just how James gets from here to there is the core of Josh Mond's debut directorial feature. Mond (producer of *Simon Killer*, *Afterschool* and *Martha Marcy May Marlene*) brings true-life emotional investment to the story: he lost his own mother to cancer not so long ago. Which may be why, for all James's short-fused douche behaviour, for all his abuse of his best friend Nick (Scott Mescudi) and of his patient girlfriend Jayne (Makenzie Leigh), he never totally forfeits our sympathy.

Abbott's riveting performance as James, at once aggressive and helpless – "What am I supposed to do?" he howls pathetically – is the prime focus of Mond's fluid camera, but he's matched by Cynthia Nixon, who's heartbreakingly vulnerable as his dying mother Gail. Honest, moving and often unexpectedly funny, *James White* leaves us with Gail's words to her son: "It's OK to be sad." **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **None**



BLACK MASS 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 21 MARCH DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

JOHNNY DEPP SWAGGERS OUT OF his career slump as Whitey Bulger, the real-life Boston mobster turned informant. Bulger's collusion with playground pal turned FBI up-and-comer John Connolly (Joel Edgerton) hints at Scorsese-style ideas of moral greyness and complex characterisation that aren't followed through. Yes, Depp is better than he has been in a long time, but the film offers the misconception that a bloke being violent – however good he is at is – is somehow enough to make him interesting. Bolstered by its supporting cast (Cumberbatch, Bacon, Jesse Plemons) this is a stylish but slightly empty ride. **Nathan Ditum**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



TANGERINE 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

OUT 28 MARCH DVD

DESPITE ALL THE COVERAGE AND cracking reviews, Sean Baker's film was only in British cinemas for a grand total of about 30 seconds, so don't miss the chance to catch up with it on disc. Taking place on Christmas Eve, it follows two transgender prostitutes' quest through the scuzzier side of Los Angeles to find a cheating boyfriend (and pimp) but this is no mumblecore mope 'n' moan. The lead pair (Kitana Kiki Rodriguez and Mya Taylor) are whirlwinds of punky attitude and energy; if anything, the film plays like an updated screwball comedy. Subtly political and frequently hilarious, it's a treat. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS › **None**



A WALK IN THE WOODS 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD

THINK REESE WITHERSPOON HAD IT hard in *Wild*? Check out this hiking effort from Robert Redford and Nick Nolte – at about twice her age, and twice her weight in Nolte's case, the pair embark on the fearsome Appalachian Trail. *A Walk In The Woods* is a much mellower take on the hiking experience than *Wild*, with Redford playing real-life author Bill Bryson, who reunites with his gravelly-voiced, somewhat embarrassing old buddy Katz (Nolte). Their trip unfolds at an age-appropriately unhurried pace, but the leads' chemistry smoothes the path to the finish line. **Stephen Puddicombe**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes** › **Interviews**



MISSISSIPPI GRIND 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, DIGITAL HD

FILMMAKING DUO ANNA BODEN and Ryan Fleck (*Half Nelson*, *It's Kind Of A Funny Story*) take a gamble on Ben Mendelsohn and Ryan Reynolds in a road movie that wallows deeply in the doldrums of addiction. As our leads take a do-or-die pilgrimage down the titular river and even further into the red, it's like watching the proverbial car crash in slow motion. At times the drama threatens to stall altogether, but it's redeemed by a seductive delta-blues soundtrack and the charisma of its stars, who are by turns infuriating, electric, deplorable and captivating. **Matthew Anderson**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**

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SUFFRAGETTE 12

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

UNBELIEVABLY, IT TOOK UNTIL 1928 for women to be able to vote in the UK, and the campaign was a hard-fought one, as Sarah Gavron's film makes searingly clear. Carey Mulligan shines as a laundry worker who gradually reaches a political awakening, while a host of other cracking British actresses flesh out the movement, including Helena Bonham Carter, Anne-Marie Duff, Romola Garai and the always-welcome Natalie Press. The film's not quite as polite as some early reviews reckoned – scenes of force-feeding are suitably horrific – though it's a surprise that the very relevant World War I barely gets a mention. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Featurettes**



THE LADY IN THE VAN 12

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

AFTER STAGE AND RADIO VERSIONS, Alan Bennett now adapts his memoir for the screen, with Alex Jennings playing Bennett and Maggie Smith, veteran of the two previous formats, again essaying Miss Shepherd, who parked her clapped-out van in the writer's Camden driveway and stayed put for 15 years. Smith makes us care for a woman who's beyond cantankerous and just short of pernicious, and Jennings unfussily portrays the two sides of Bennett (writer, man) who physically share the frame, usually squabbling. But the flashes of backstory are clunky and the meta-dimensions come with a whiff of self-satisfaction. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Making Of** › **Featurettes** › **Deleted scenes**



GEMMA BOVERY 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD

WITH AT LEAST FOUR MEN LUSTING after her, there's clearly something about Gemma Arterton in Anne Fontaine's (*Coco Before Chanel*) sort-of retelling of 19th-century French classic *Madame Bovary*. Unlike Gustave Flaubert's daring, painfully honest plunge into his heroine's psyche, here she's not much more than an object of desire – both for the camera and for the male characters (chiefly baker Fabrice Luchini, echoing his role in Ozon's *In The House*). Still, taken on its own terms *Gemma Bovery* is a compelling, sometimes smart tangle of love affairs realised in an easy-on-the-eye French setting. **Stephen Puddicombe**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Featurette** › **Interviews**



THE PROGRAM 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

STEPHEN FREARS' STUDY OF DISGRACED sporting hero Lance Armstrong takes its cues from the man himself: it's lean, powerful, fast-paced, but also clinical and unfeeling. Focusing solely on Armstrong's efficient regime of blood-doping and aggressive self-promotion throughout his seven fraudulent Tour de France victories, it's first and foremost a showcase for Ben Foster. The star offers remarkable mimicry of Armstrong; we see flickers of self-doubt, but mostly an outwardly charming showman hiding aninner sociopathy. Frears shies from exploring Armstrong's compulsive nature but maintains such gripping momentum that you won't feel cheated. Ahem. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



SUNSET SONG 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

OUT 4 APRIL DVD, BD

SCOTLAND, THE EARLY 1900S: ASPIRING teacher Chris (Agyness Deyn) is finding it hard to escape her bleak rural life (personified by grizzled pa Peter Mullan). This adap of Lewis Grassic Gibbon's classic novel (included as an e-book) is clearly a labour of love for director Terence Davies, becoming a characteristic study of how environment and circumstances shape communities and individuals. Yet while Davies' meticulous, patient approach offers beautiful, burnished visuals, the episodic narrative can't help but become a dour soap opera, in which Deyn stoically withstands one overfamiliar tragedy after another without ever achieving the necessary emotional wallop. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **E-book**



KILL YOUR FRIENDS 18

Film ★★☆☆☆ Extras N/A

OUT NOW DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

JOHN NIVEN ADAPTS HIS OWN CULT novel into a self-impressed *American Psycho* rip-off set in Brit-pop London that's entertaining enough but doesn't always hit the right notes. Nicholas Hoult does his charismatic best as wunderkind A&R sociopath Steven Stelfox, a man so desperate to find the next big thing and climb the industry pile he'll stove in heads to get it. But if Niven's repellent speeches work on paper, that doesn't always fly as dialogue. And despite the cracking '90s soundtrack, a clear sense of the era is missing, making the more grotesque elements of this dark comedy seem trite and try-hard rather than bleakly funny. **Jane Crowther**

EXTRAS › **TBC**

The round-up

Ghosts! Witches! Warriors! Botox?

Anton Corbijn creates a gorgeously evocative mood piece with **Life** (★★★, out now, DVD/BD/VOD), his study of the relationship between James Dean (Dane DeHaan) and snapper Dennis Stock (Robert Pattinson) as both negotiate the complexities of stardom. DeHaan's Dean is spookily accurate while Pattinson emotionally anchors...



Vin Diesel takes a lifelong *D&D* obsession to new heights in **The Last Witch Hunter** (★★, out now DVD/BD/Digital HD); there's an admirable attempt at levity but this urban fantasy brings nothing new to the tabletop...

The chill of the unseen is botched in **Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension** (★★, out now, DVD/BD/3D/Digital HD) which wrings fresh dread from a *Poltergeist*-y pitch, but the mythology is messy and the CG ghoul looks daft.

As CG planes fall from the sky, a man tries to get back to his wife in sci-fi **Alienate** (★★, out now, DVD). Mighty ambitious for a low-budgeter, but the script's disjointed and the mood dejected...

There's not a single original idea in **Criminal Activities** (★★★, out now, DVD), but it's worth a watch for Michael Pitt and Dan Stevens, ace as city boys in serious debt to John Travolta's Botox-ed mob boss...

The House On Pine Street (★★★ out now, DVD) is a *Rosemary's Baby* redux elevated by Emily Goss, excellent as a mentally fragile pregnant woman in a creepy new home...

Don't be fooled by the sleeve: Bruce Willis gives just 10 phoned-in minutes to **Extraction** (★, out 14 Mar, DVD/BD), a kidnap actioner made unwatchable by high-grain and clumsy editing...


Her opticians appointment didn't go so well.

Vengeance is theirs

A double dish of Miike malevolence...

AUDITION/OVER YOUR DEAD BODY 18



Films ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★☆

1999/2014 **OUT NOW** DVD (*OYDB*), BD (*AUDITION*)

EVEN IF YOU'VE NEVER DARED watch *Audition*, the 1999 J-horror that announced prolific Japanese director Takashi Miike to the western world, chances are you know of its reputation. Brace yourself as demure 24-year-old Asami (Eihi Shiina) does terrible things to tricksy middle-aged filmmaker Shigeharu (Ryo Ishibashi) with needles, piano wire and the sing-song mantra "kiri, kiri, kiri" ("deeper, deeper, deeper").

Is it all in his head, male paranoia, or is she really taking revenge for his secrets and lies? It's impossible to say, and lines between fact and fiction are also blurred in *Over Your Dead Body* (available separately), a 2014 adaptation of the renowned 1825 kabuki play *Yostuya Kaidan* in which a samurai's wife takes ghostly revenge on her husband after he abandons her for a younger woman. The twist, in Miike's update, is that three modern-day actors (Ko Shibasaki, Ebizô Ichikawa, Miho Nakanishi) are rehearsing the play and find their own lives paralleling those of their characters.

Over Your Dead Body is Miike's first horror film – and best film, period – since *Audition*, and again tells a story of female vengeance in a style that is controlled and composed: the bursts of violence in both movies impact all the harder for coming from a place of poise. Given the film's quality, the lack of extras is a shame. Not so the *Audition* Blu-ray, which comes with two commentaries, interviews and an excellent appreciation by Japanese cinema historian Tony Rayns. It's also a 2K restoration, meaning the scalpel-sharp visuals cut deeper, deeper, deeper.

Jamie Graham

EXTRAS *Audition:* › **Commentaries** › **Featurettes**
Over Your Dead Body: › **None**



SHEBA, BABY 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★★☆

1975 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

PAM GRIER'S FINAL BLAXPLOITATION film (unless you count *Jackie Brown*), this actioner isn't as much of a fan favourite as *Coffy* or *Foxy Brown*, possibly because of the lack of gratuitous nudity. Returning to her southern hometown to find her dad being muscled out of his insurance business by the local hoods, Sheba (Grier) decides to bring the fight to the mob. Light on the 'ploitation (at least by director William *Three On A Meathook* Girdler's standards) and heavy on the wah-wah, *Sheba, Baby* is one of the lesser gems of the genre – but still deserving of this overdue special edition package. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries** › **Documentary** › **Featurettes**



A TOUCH OF ZEN 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★☆

1971 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

THE GRAND-DADDY OF ALL WUXIA movies – and a potent influence on *Star Wars*, *Kill Bill* and *The Matrix* – King Hu's Ming Dynasty-era epic slips fluently between genres, from comedy to romance to ghost story to political thriller to metaphysical fantasy. This is the complete three-hour original – and superb it looks too in this restoration, with Hu's poetic vision of misty Taiwanese landscapes given full value. As the bumbling hero Shi Jun gurns a bit too much, but Hsu Feng makes a fine heroine, stern and dauntless. Beefy extras include a Hu doc and critic David Cairn's video essay. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS › **Commentary** › **Documentary** › **Video essay** › **Booklet**



ANIMAL HOUSE 15

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1978 **OUT NOW** DVD

TIE ON YOUR TOGA AND PLEDGE allegiance to the frenetic frat comedy that launched the careers of writer Harold Ramis and director John Landis; you can clearly see the imprint of both in the wry dialogue and delightfully straight-faced tone. The ensemble cast – all unknowns bar John Belushi and Donald Sutherland – are superb, and superbly cast, as the comprehensive but dated bonus features attest. Most of the gags are unashamedly juvenile, but compared to its (many) imitators *Animal House* aims more for silly than crude. Its grotty authenticity, meanwhile, won't fail to stoke recognition in students past and present. **Tom Bond**

EXTRAS › **Documentary** › **Production notes**



THE ANGRY SILENCE PG

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

1959 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

GUARANTEED TO INFURIATE CORBYN-ites, Guy Green's gritty melodrama embeds one of Richard Attenborough's strongest roles in a welter of union-bashing. Dickie's a machine operator in a provincial engineering works, with an Italian wife (Pier Angeli) and a third kid on the way. When a lefty agitator stirs up an unofficial strike, Dickie's one of the few to carry on working – and soon the only one. So when the strike's over he's shunned by his fellow workers, and things get steadily nastier. Unsubtle stuff, but redeemed by its committed turns – not least Angeli and Alfred Burke as the insidious agent provocateur.

Philip Kemp

EXTRAS › **Interviews**

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FLETCH PG

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1985 **OUT NOW** DVD

WITH ITS HAROLD FALTERMEYER score and starring role for Chevy Chase, Michael Ritchie's cult comedy-thriller is none more '80s. It holds up to more than nostalgia, though. Based on Gregory Mcdonald's novels about investigative reporter Irwin Fletcher, the plot is a suitably labyrinthine slice of crime involving drugs, real estate and a contract killing. Yet the story is secondary, as the disguise-donning Chase – in probably his best role – shows he was the Will Ferrell of his day. Scarcely a scene goes by without a memorable non sequitur, while Ritchie keeps things lively with incidental bits of slapstick. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS› **None**



THE FLINTSTONES U

Film ★★☆☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1994 **OUT NOW** DVD

"IS THE EARTH FLAT?" ASKS JOHN Goodman's winning Fred. No, but almost everything else is in Universal's stab at chiselling the 'toon into a live-action franchise. The plot mistakes corporate embezzlement and evil boss Kyle MacLachlan's manipulation of Fred for child's play, yet the painful stone-age puns and sexist skits (Halle Berry's saucy secretary 'Sharon Stone', Liz Taylor's mother-in-law) are no better. A game cast (Goodman, Rick Moranis, Elizabeth Perkins) have a "gay old time" in a well-realised backdrop – lobster lawnmowers, dino-pets – but script and story groan with strain. Yabba dabba don't. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS› **Commentary› Documentary › Gallery› Production notes**



HAPPY GILMORE 12

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1996 **OUT NOW** DVD

IF YOU'VE ONLY ENDURED ADAM Sandler's later oeuvre you'll be shocked to find that his films, though always formulaic, were once funny. In Dennis Dugan's sports comedy, Sandler plays his usual childish loser: an ice-hockey brawler transported to the genteel world of golf but unable to control his near-homicidal shit-fits. With a great cast (including slimy Christopher McDonald and Carl 'Apollo Creed' Weathers) and some enduring exchanges ("I eat pieces of shit like you for breakfast"; "You eat pieces of shit for breakfast?") it's arguably Sandler's best, even if the rubbish text-based extras belong in the late '90s. **Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS› **Production notes› Bios**



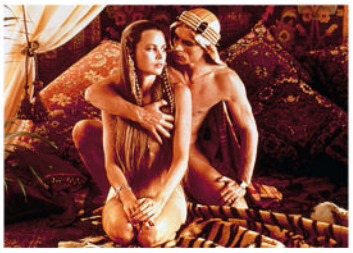
FIVE DOLLS FOR AN AUGUST MOON 15

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1970 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

MORE HORNY WHODUNNIT THAN genuine giallo, Mario Bava's effort holds guilty pleasures for fans of Italian chintz. The setting: a sun-baked private island. The suspects: a group of scheming industrialists and their glamorous WAGS. The tone: *Austin Powers* meets Agatha Christie. The colours and camerawork entrance even when the melodramatics fail to, the film retains a time-capsule curiosity, and the scene where Edwige Fenech stripteases in a room full of bored-looking Euro cardigans to twanging jazz couldn't be more '70s if it went on strike in beige bell bottoms. **Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS› **Commentary› Documentary › Isolated music/FX track› Booklet**



VALENTINO 18

Film ★★★☆☆ Extras ★★★☆☆

1977 **OUT NOW** DUAL FORMAT

"WHAT IDIOT MADE THIS?" WAS KEN Russell's own verdict on his sex-soaked biopic of silent cinema's first megastar, Rudolph Valentino. But for lovers of the director's extravagant style, age has improved both the stunning recreation of decadent '20s Hollywood and the story of Valentino's rise from tango gigolo to tortured screen idol. Revel in its high-camp homage to the visual excess of silent cinema, from Rudolf Nureyev's wildly theatrical lead turn to the sandy shenanigans of 1921's *The Sheikh*. It's at its best when Nureyev steps up in style to flaunt Valentino's brooding talents on the dance floor. **Kate Stables**

EXTRAS› **Commentary› Interview › Audio lecture**



COMFORT AND JOY PG

Film ★★★★☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

1984 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

UNJUSTLY CRITIQUED ON ITS INITIAL release for not being the equal of *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero* and for seeming to make light of Glasgow's deadly ice-cream turf wars, Bill Forsyth's comedy has matured with age. Viewed now, it's both a touching portrait of a mid-life crisis and a love letter to a city that has seldom looked more noirishly romantic than it does when lensed through Chris Menges' camera. Bill Paterson has rarely been finer either as the dumped DJ who, when not taking requests or recording inane jingles, arbitrates to quell a spat between rival Scots-Italian families. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS› **Interviews**



AN AMERICAN TAIL: FIEVEL GOES WEST U

Film ★★☆☆☆ Extras ★★☆☆☆

1991 **OUT NOW** DVD

DON BLUTH HAD HIT THE ROAD BY the time this belated *American Tail* sequel appeared, and his absence is sorely felt in a hectic caper that substitutes the original's charm and warmth for an excess of cartoonish silliness. At least it ups the star quotient: John Cleese channels sneery disdain as the sneaky feline who lures plucky rodent Fievel out west, while James Stewart (his final role) is all croaky gravitas as the veteran gunslinger who has our hero's back. Sadly, the sole other point of interest is the bizarrely unexpurgated penis doodle that appears around the 44-minute mark. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS› **Sing-along song**



DRAGNET PG

Film ★★☆☆☆ Extras ★☆☆☆☆

1987 **OUT NOW** DVD

DAN AYKROYD FRONTS AND CO-wrote this comic update of the '60s cop show best known for its four-note musical sting ("dum-de-dum-dum"). He plays by-the-book Sgt. Joe Friday, who partners up with Tom Hanks' laid-back rookie to investigate a bizarre tale involving a smut king, a missing boa constrictor, an Orange County cult, human sacrifice and chemical theft. If it was a nostalgia-fest back in '87, it's positively ancient now, feeling desperately outdated. At least Aykroyd is solid, delivering his noir-ish lines at high velocity, while it's good to see a callow Hanks in one of his lesser-known comic roles. Largely D.O.A, though. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS› **Production notes› Cast biogs**

ALLSTAR



WORDS **TARA BENNETT**
PHOTOS **BILL EDWARDS**

All the fun of the fair

Lounge brings you the best of the 113th North American International Toy Fair. Buyer beware: mild spoilers await...

▲ NECA THE HATEFUL EIGHT FIGURES

OUT TBC 2016 **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

QT's latest rag-tag band gets a well-deserved ultra-detailed NECA treatment.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE

Each actor-likeness sculpt features astonishing costume and accessory details: gloves, belt buckles, buttons, you name it. So if you didn't see the 70mm version, here's a nice close goggle.

▼ BATMAN RAINBOW 6-PACK SERIES

OUT AUGUST **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

A reproduction of the lurid collection of rainbow-coloured Batman suits as seen in *Detective Comics* issue 241 (1957).

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE COMICS Basically, that anything Batman – even garish fashion choices – will probably wind up immortalised in another medium.



▶ ULTIMATE TECH NOIR TERMINATOR

OUT TBC 2016 **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

A terrifyingly realistic sculpt of the fresh-faced T-800 who tracks Sarah Connor into a none-more-'80s nightclub.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE

Don't know about you, but we've never really studied the graffiti-like markings on Arnie's shirt before. Is he off skateboarding later, or what?



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▲ BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 1:12 RC BATMOBILE

OUT LATE 2016

EXCITEMENT RATING ★★★★★

An app-controllable version of Batfleck's wheels with Bats and Supes figures.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE The level of detail flags how much this new Batmobile is ready for war. 'No step', it says – capiche, Kal-el?

▼ FUNKO POP VINYL NEW GHOSTBUSTERS

OUT MAY **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

The new big-screen 'busters get a stylised vinyl make-over.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE One of the figures is a shrieking old lady ghost, not unlike the original film's library spectre. Plus Chris Hemsworth's receptionist Kevin suited and booted!

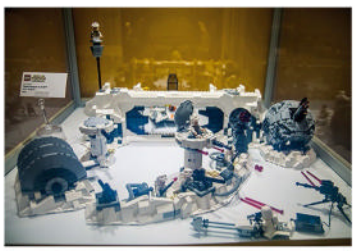


▼ LEGO ASSAULT ON HOTH SET

OUT MAY **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

A massive, 2,144-piece replica of the not-long-for-this-Hoth Rebel base.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE That large-scale ice-engineering is no walk in the park. Will Kevin Smith be inspired to write another classic rant about labour issues in *Star Wars*?





▲ STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES PHASER BOBBLE

OUT TBC 2016 **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

The iconic zapper from the '60s TV series, mounted on a spring.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE TV SHOW 2016 is *Trek*'s 50th anniversary so expect a lot more merch. Also, phasers are pleasingly limber when spring-mounted.

▶ WONDER WOMAN FIGURE

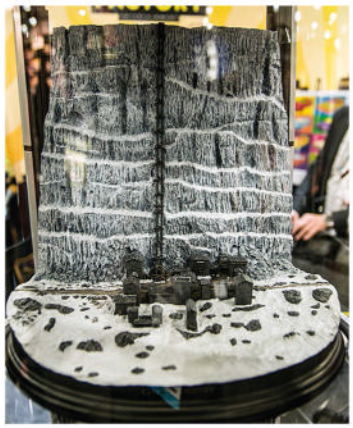
OUT TBC MARCH

EXCITEMENT RATING ★★★★★

A sculpt of the Amazonian superhero so realistic it looks, as Louis Walsh might put it, like a little Gal Gadot.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE Standing atop the *DOJ* logo, she's clearly not going to take any BS from B and S. And that's hopefully the Lasso Of Truth on her hip.





◀ GAME OF THRONES: THE WALL POLYSTONE

OUT TBC 2016

EXCITEMENT RATING ★★★★★

The latest in a line of limited-edition, polystone models of key Westeros locations.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE TV SHOW We had a good search for Jon Snow's corpse but found nothing, lending credence to fan theories that his story might not be done...

▼ MARVEL SELECT CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR FIGURES

OUT JUNE **EXCITEMENT RATING** ★★★★

Actor-likeness sculpts of the bro-triangle central to Marvel's new epic.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE MOVIE We get a detailed look at the Winter Soldier's metal arm and his weapon of choice. Could this be the character transitioning back to his old Bucky self?





Extras

The other stuff we're excited about this month...

DEADPOOL APPAREL

CLOTHING **OUT NOW**

Problem: you want to do a bit of fourth-wall-breaking but don't want to be mistaken for a loon. Solution: don some *Deadpool* gear (available via tvstoreonline.com) and everyone'll understand you're simply paying homage to the recent anti-superhero hit. Whole hoggers/Comic-Con attendees will want to go for the one-piece suit, but if you're keeping it minimalist there's the 'icon' t-shirt or the socks. We have, of course, named our pair 'Bea' and 'Arthur'.





GAME OF THRONES GOODIES

VARIOUS **OUT NOW**





With only a month to go before the good folk (and bad) of Westeros return, there's a fresh deluge of *GOT* merch. Sad there's no official *Thrones* LEGO? Then get stuck into Macfarlane's Iron Throne Room Construction Set (above). Don't leave that pointy chair anywhere under foot, mind... Also available from hboshopeu.com: adorable Pop! figurines of Daenerys' dragons (metallic special editions too, if you're looking for an awesome new door knocker) and *GOT* journals, which come in four varieties: Night's Watch (with the brothers' full oath on the back), Hand Of The King, Iron Throne and Valar Morghulis ("all men must die"). Bit steep at £12.99 apiece; but so undeniably handsome, all fans must buy.

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE

SOUNDTRACK **OUT NOW**



After *Mad Max*, it's fury overload for Dutch multi-tasker Junkie XL, re-teamed with his old boss Hans Zimmer. Justice opens for service with an earthquake slam – then it gets tasty. Tribal drums, choirs, strings and weaponised electronics mass ominously; even the piano of 'The Red Capes Are Coming' sounds gym-pumped. Horror-show dissonances and epic *Man Of Steel* throwbacks offer variation, but the electro-symphonic bulk of it is bulldozer scoring: bring earplugs.

DEADPOOL

SOUNDTRACK **OUT NOW**

On the basis that a whole album of arch-retro pop frippery might prove "relentlessly annoying", the mouthy merc's soundtrack offers pick'n'mix pleasures. Hip-hop, folk-pop and prime '80s cheese ('Careless Whisper') share space with Junkie XL's layered electro-scapes. The latter uphold mood over momentum, but the moods range wide: while 'Maximum Effort' throws the fight-night moves you expect, 'A Face I Would Sit On' is gentler than its title suggests.



TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION

GAME **OUT NOW**



Few online shootman games can boast the ambition of *The Division*. Developer Ubisoft has built a street-perfect, apocalyptic Big Apple for the game, set five days after a smallpox pandemic causes the collapse of the US government. Together with fellow Division members it's your job to piece America back together by headshot-ing your way to the source of the outbreak and recovering gear from the hostile, multiplayer-only Dark Zone.

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Three's company: Mangan and Weston are joined by Rebecca Liddiard, left, as Constable Adelaide Stratton.

TV

Could it be magic?

On set of quasi-supernatural mystery series Houdini And Doyle...

WHEN HE SIGNED UP TO play Harry Houdini, Michael Weston must've known what to expect. After all, there's one illusion that's pretty much synonymous with the master escapologist: the Chinese Water Torture Cell, which saw Houdini shackled around the ankles then lowered head-first into a tank of water. But Weston wasn't prepared for how scary the stunt really was.

"It was truly terrifying," he admits, talking to *Lounge* from the comfort of his warm, dry trailer, on set near Liverpool docks. "You're so completely out of control, and your mind plays tricks on you. I was freaking out." "Yeah," deadpans Stephen Mangan, who stars opposite Weston as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. "He does all that sort of thing... And I wear a moustache."

Developed by *House M.D.* showrunner David Shore, *Houdini And Doyle* is a 10-part mystery drama based on the real-life friendship of the two 20th-Century icons. Well, loosely based on it. In the show, the duo become amateur detectives, elbowing their way into a series of weird criminal investigations to debate the existence of the paranormal. That bit isn't true. But the reality is so irresistibly strange it could have been invented for TV: Houdini, an illusionist so talented people thought he really had supernatural powers, was a sceptic who went around exposing false mediums, while Doyle, creator of uber-logician Sherlock Holmes, was a true believer who regularly hosted séances. And they *were* friends.

Magical mystery tour

"These two guys were on the forefront of their two worlds," explains Weston. "Houdini was an international star before there really were international stars, and Doyle was a huge writer. There's a certain isolation that goes along with that, so they gravitated towards each other. They valued each other's intellect and insight."

Mangan concurs. "They're the biggest prize for each other," he says. "If I can convince him that there's an afterlife, then I can convince the world." You can almost hear Tumblr's servers groaning at the prospect of hosting hundreds of new gif-heavy blogs analysing their relationship. Bromance aside, there'll be plenty of other things for viewers to chew over. On the day *TF* drops by the set, the basement of a mid-terrace Victorian house has been transformed into a police station, where the sleuths are digging through piles of authentic-looking paperwork.

The mystery-of-the-week concerns a missing woman – her husband's been arrested, and while Doyle's distracted by reports of an alien creature spotted near the woman's home, Houdini suspects the police of racial profiling. Chuck in an iPhone or two and it could almost be a scene from a *CSI* spin-off; belief in fairies aside, the show deals with topics that feel very current.

"I love the comparison of where we were then and where we are now," smiles Weston. "There are a lot of similarities, but we're so sure of so many things now. I think there's something refreshing about being in a place of wonder, where things moved at a different pace. There's a prevailing innocence to that time, and I think we long for it." Might be as well to leave the walrus 'tache in the past, though... **Sarah Dobbs**

ETA | 17 MARCH *Houdini And Doyle* begins on ITV Encore this month.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

THE X-FILES 1993-
He wants to believe, she definitely doesn't. The ultimate paranormal detective show.

DIRK GENTLY 2010-2012
Mangan's played a quirky crime-solver before, in this Douglas Adams adap.

SHERLOCK 2010-
The Great Detective's current incarnation sees him skulking around modern-day London. Mostly.



Winter warnings

Same Game, new rules. HBO's monster hit reinvents itself...

GAME OF THRONES: SEASON 5 18

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★☆

2015 **OUT NOW** DIGITAL HD **14 MARCH** DVD, BD



AS WESTEROS REOPENS for business, Tyrion Lannister's worldview is newly boxed-in (so to speak). Young Arya Stark pursues a new identity; whole populations "have to learn to see things differently". A push-pull tension is set: between characters as we know them and the people they are becoming, assuming, that is, that they keep their heads.

As serialised strategising goes, it's a smart game-play. Great series often box clever and retire at four/five seasons; less canny ones slide into exhaustion. Not on showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss' watch. Without faking a clean slate, HBO's George R.R. Martin adap pushes characters into tense new allegiances and roles, all while honouring the pull of old bonds, boozing habits and fire-belching dragons.

Granted, the reduced pace required to pull off this semi-restart drew flak from critics. Maybe Arya's arc drags a little; or maybe it's just that the killer shocks of earlier seasons stoked expectations of similar gotchas. Where's a poisoning or a defenestration of a minor when you need one? As Conleth Hill's wisdom-spouting Lord Varys says in the kind of line that spotlights the show's self-awareness and sharpens our responses, "Perhaps we've grown so used to horror, we assume there's no other way."

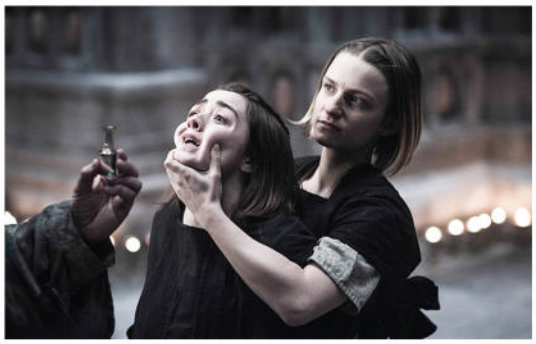
But there are other ways, one being to charge the opening episodes with the kind of portent that suggests designs at work. The opening of season five offers plot clues that then echo throughout what might seem like an eternity for impatient viewers. Lena Headey's Cersei receives dire witchy warnings – and ascends steps she will later descend. When someone talks of newcomers the Faith Militant's readiness "to dole out mercy or justice", mercy, justice and fundamentalism are established as series signposts. When Carice Van Houten's red witch Melisandre lights a pyre of 'justice' and Kit Harington's Jon Snow fires a merciful arrow, more omens ring out: Melisandre lights an awful flame later and re-encounters Jon at the fateful series finale – start your season six theories here...

So, Peter Dinklage's exiled Tyrion is trying to become just "one more drunken dwarf" but invoking Lannister-speak when needed: "I always pay my debts... I'm well known for it." Nikolaj Coster-Waldau's Jaime

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Game theory: Daenerys (Emilia Clarke) leads Meereen, (left) the High Sparrow (Jonathan Pryce) proves an intriguing threat to Cersei (Lena Headey) and (below) Arya Stark (Maisie Williams) suffers through her assassin training.



'Season five's climax leaves little doubt that season six is armed to deliver'

Lannister travels to Dorne to retrieve his daughter-by-twincest; the venomous climax to his trip will surely stoke season six's aggro. Emilia Clarke's Daenerys tries to rule without dragon-fire, at risk to her authority; Maisie Williams' Arya begins to reinvent herself as a 'faceless' assassin. Jon gets the option not to be the bastard of Winterfell any more – and Sophie Turner's Sansa Stark is advised to "stop being a bystander" and start playing.

The conniving Petyr 'Littlefinger' Baelish's (Aidan Gillen) advice has grim consequences for Sansa, which plunged *Thrones* into new controversy when broadcast. Is episode six's gruelling finale needed? The argument goes two ways. No, because no one needs another awful example of screen violence against women; yes, because how else would the wedding of Sansa and Iwan Rheon's psychotic Ramsay Bolton ever have ended? Either way, the scene may yet have consequences. Squaring up to the controversy and promising pay-offs on an emotional, engaged commentary, writer Bryan Cogman promises: "The story's not over, my friends."

By episode eight, repayment for five seasons of debts arrives – with a roar. Like season two's 'Blackwater', the thrilling, chilling 'Hardhome' is *Thrones* at its cinematic best. Winter is finally here, as promised: and it doesn't disappoint.

The impact of the final two episodes is, likewise, magnified by season five's stealthy scene-setting. Episodes nine and 10 brilliantly interweave crowd-pleasing clout with nuances and depths: they aren't just about solving clues, or issuing gotchas. In the city of Meereen's fighting pits, there's time for a debate about ethics during some visceral dust-ups – and for a punch-the-air pay-off. But any cheering is silenced by the shattering fate of Kerry Ingram's young Shireen Baratheon. And silenced again by Cersei, whose suffering justifies single-handedly the careful shifting of character positions: stoked by Headey's performance, we actually feel for Cersei. Now there's a shift.

When the climactic arrival of a new outsized fighter for Cersei's cause pays off season four's finale, we're reminded of something crucial about *Thrones*' showrunners. If we entered season five with small doubts, the climax leaves little doubt that season six is armed to deliver. Every character living (perhaps a dead one, too...) has been moved to a fascinating new playing position, presumably ready for endgame manoeuvres. We're entering that murky area where the TV series is ahead of George R.R. Martin's books, but don't be surprised if Benioff and Weiss pay off the narrative debts they've notched up. They're well known for it.

Extras-wise, the boxset brims with rewards, including an armoury of commentaries and a kind of CliffsNotes section on *Thrones* lore. The highlight is the episode 10 anatomy, which shows how much love went into this vigorous remix of *Game* rules: a high-stakes gamble, boldly executed. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries › Featurettes › Deleted scenes › In-episode guides (BD)**



GIRLS SEASON 4 15

Show ★★★★☆ **Extras** N/A

2015 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

LENA DUNHAM'S ZEITGEIST-TAPPER returns, lighter than its earlier seasons (which adeptly handled issues of OCD, addiction, rehab...). Dunham's wannabe 'voice of a generation' Hannah Horvath is off to an Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she quickly proves about as popular as a broken condom. But despite this separation from her besties Shoshanna, Marnie and Jessa, the season doesn't suffer thanks to character juggling worthy of *Game Of Thrones*. Thankfully, despite his move to the Dark Side, Adam Driver is also still a force to be reckoned with as Hannah's ex Adam, now with the infuriating Mimi-Rose (Gillian Jacobs). Funny, frank, button-pushing TV. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › **TBC**



COMMUNITY SEASON 6 TBC

Show ★★★★☆ **Extras** N/A

2015 **OUT 21 MARCH** DVD, BD, DIGITAL HD

DAN HARMON'S CULT, POP CULTURE -savvy sitcom about a band of misfits at America's worst community college has been living on borrowed time for three years. The fact this oft-prophesied, Yahoo-funded sixth season even exists, then, is a minor miracle; that it sends the series out on something of a high is the TV equivalent of the second coming. Turning the meta in-joke dial up full whack may result in a far more indulgent and uneven season than the early glory years, but there are more gems than misfires, including an inspired series finale which ranks as one of the show's best episodes. Now, where's that movie? **Jordan Farley**

EXTRAS › **TBC**



Funny talk

Telling jokes is a serious business...

Nobody could remember what they were laughing at.

SICK IN THE HEAD: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT LIFE AND COMEDY

Book ★★★☆☆

JUDD APATOW | Duckworth Overlook



AS A DIRECTOR, Judd Apatow has a tendency towards self-indulgence that, in the case of *Funny People* and *This Is 40* especially, can make his comedies akin to endurance tests for some. It's no surprise, then, to see him indulging himself royally in *Sick In The Head*, a compilation of interviews with his comedy heroes that, more often than not, see the *Freaks And Geeks* man do the lion's share of the talking.

The exceptions make for the most revealing reading here. A 2005 convo with Harold Ramis shows the *Groundhog Day* director to have been one of the most perceptive, intelligent and just plain nice men in the business. There are also a couple of chats with Garry Shandling – conducted 20 years apart – that go a long way towards explaining why the man behind *The Larry Sanders Show* commands such esteem among his fellow joke-smiths.

Here's the thing, though. Being funny and talking about being funny are very different things, a fact that Apatow, for all his experience, rarely seems clued into. Would it have killed him to get his subjects to, you know, tell a few gags? It can't be coincidence that the most entertaining parts here – an encounter with Mel Brooks, a rambling duologue with Jeff Garlin – were intended for public consumption. It's also telling that less than a quarter of Apatow's 40 subjects are women (including the writer/star of Apatow's last film, Amy Schumer). Was Katherine Heigl on to something, you wonder, when she suggested *Knocked Up* was "a little sexist"? **Neil Smith**

THE CINEMATIC LEGACY OF FRANK SINATRA

Book ★★★★☆

DAVID WILLS | AMBERLEY BOOKS



FRANK THE crooner tends to overshadow Frank the actor, an injustice Wills seeks to rectify in a picture-heavy tribute that celebrates both Sinatra's Ol' Blue Eyes persona and the versatility he displayed as a leading man. Posters, stills and on-set photos jockey for space with quotes from reviews, co-stars and Sinatra himself, with meatier text provided by children Nancy, Tina and Frank Sinatra Jr. (The latter's essay on presidential assassination thriller *Suddenly* is a highlight.) **Neil Smith**

ALEX COX'S INTRODUCTION TO FILM

Book ★★★★☆

ALEX COX | KAMERA BOOKS



THE REPO MAN director brings his cult sensibility and deep knowledge to refresh the familiar terrain of film studies. A fierce critic of rapid-fire 'Monoform' moviemaking – but also wryly aware of the pressures facing independent directors – he delivers illuminating advice on everything from lens choices to copyright issues. Meanwhile, Cox's typically idiosyncratic watch-list feels like a *Moviedrome* revival, championing rarities while hilariously dissing *Blade Runner*. **Simon Kinnear**

THE X-FILES FAQ

Book ★★★★☆

JOHN KENNETH MUIR | Applause



JOHN MUIR'S MINI *X*-cyclopaedia questions everything, beginning with a stalwart defence of the original run's maligned, Mulder-lite final seasons. Muir argues that a post-9/11 shift from US self-analysis towards externally aimed anxiety killed the initial run, not a quality dip. The book's bulk swings between cultural contexts and carefully unpicked content, leavening sometimes pat info-drop entries with informed re-evaluation. Thematic breakdowns (xenophobia, creepy kids) flesh out this long-term obsessive's lovingly detailed labours. **Kevin Harley**

Three more...

Get those Boba Felt-tips ready for action!

A YEAR OF MOVIES

★★★☆☆



Subtitled *365 Films To Watch On The Day They Happened*, this is a nice idea in search of a blog; each entry's heavy on plot synopsis, light on analysis. Handy if you just can't decide what to watch, though: it's New Year's Day – time for *Platoon*!

SPECTRE: THE COMPLETE COMIC STRIP COLLECTION

★★★★☆



Not a comic version of the recent movie but a large-format collection of '60s newspaper strips featuring Bond vs Blofeld in four Fleming adaps (starting with *Thunderball*). Digitally scrubbed up so they don't look like tomorrow's chip paper. No purist-irking colourisation, either.

STAR WARS: AN ANTI-STRESS COLOURING BOOK

★★★☆☆



Pictures of Jar Jar: at least two. Pictures of Kylo Ren, Rey, BB-8...: zero. Not sure the Force is entirely with this one. But the combo of *Star Wars* and Art Nouveau works pretty well; who knew battle droids and floral designs mixed so well?

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TOTAL FILM competition



WIN!

A 32-INCH LED TV WITH AGAINST THE SUN!

Storms, sharks, starvation... No, it's not *Total Film*'s latest trip to the Cannes Film Festival; these are the challenges facing a group of US Navy airmen in World War 2 drama *Against The Sun*. Based on a harrowing true story, the film sees its heroic trio crash-land their torpedo bomber in the South Pacific, where they must cling to life on a tiny raft adrift in the open sea. No food, no water, no hope of rescue... Can these three virtual strangers sail more than 1,000 miles to safety?

Starring *Harry Potter* favourite Tom Felton, Garret Dillahunt (*12 Years A Slave*, *Looper*, *The Mindy Project*) and Jake Abel (the *Percy Jackson* series, *The Lovely Bones*), *Against The Sun* is in cinemas and available to download right now, or from 14 March you can buy the DVD, which comes with a bundle of featurettes including the superbly named *Blisters, Burns And Bites*.

To celebrate the release, we're offering one lucky reader a chance to win a 32-inch flatscreen LED TV plus *Against The Sun* on DVD. Ten runners-up will receive a copy of the movie. For a chance to win, visit **www.futurecompetitions.com/TF244** and answer the following question:

Who plays Tom Felton's on-screen dad in the* Harry Potter *series?

A *Jason Patric*
B *Jason Isaacs*
C *Jason Statham*

TO ENTER ONLINE HEAD TO WWW.FUTURECOMPETITIONS.COM/TF244

TERMS & CONDITIONS You can enter this competition at any time between 11 March and 7 April 2016 by entering online at www.futurecompetitions.com/TF244. By taking part in the competition you agree to the Competition Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at www.futurenet.com/futureonline/competitionrules.asp. By entering you confirm you are happy to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Ltd and carefully selected third parties. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, follow the instructions online. Competition helpline number 01225 442244. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and, unless otherwise stated, are limited to one per household. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. Unless otherwise stated, the Competition is open to all GB residents of 18 years and over, except employees of Future Publishing (including freelancers) and any party involved in the competition or their households. By entering a Competition you give permission to use your name, likeness and personal information in connection with the Competition and for promotional purposes. If you are a winner, you may have to provide additional information. Details of winners will be available on request within three months of the closing date. If you are a winner, receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Competition Rules. You acknowledge and agree that neither the Company nor any associated third parties shall have any liability to you in connection with your use and/or possession of your prize.

ON DEMAND

The pick of the films and shows to stream and download this month...



Get ready for a binge: *Daredevil*'s back on Netflix, with all 13 episodes of season two due for release on 18 March. Turning up the heat in Hell's Kitchen will be not one but two classic Marvel killing machines: The Punisher and Elektra. For more, see the feature in last month's *TF*... Netflix is also continuing to air new weekly episodes of *Better Call Saul* Season 2 and there's the first Pee-wee Herman movie in nearly 30 years, *Pee-wee's Big Holiday* (18 March), also starring Joe Manganiello (presumably not as his *Magic Mike* character). And if you're in the mood for a double-bill of loudly exhilarating followed by quietly devastating, there's *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014, ★★★★) and *45 Years* (2015, ★★★★).

There's a new *Ben-Hur* out this summer, so why not watch the old one first (1959, ★★★★★) on Amazon Prime? Amazon's also got Oscar-winning animation *Brave* (2012, ★★★★) and not-even-Oscar-nominated animation *The LEGO Movie* (2014, ★★★★). Plus chalk/cheese detective movies *Se7en* (1995, ★★★★★) and *Mr. Holmes* (2015, ★★★).

Sky Movies On Demand, meanwhile, has profound psychodrama *Inside Out* (2015, ★★★★★) and slapstick family cartoon *San Andreas* (2015, ★★). And yes it's terrible, but not so terrible you'll be bored: *Terminator Genisys* (2015, ★★), the first in a trilogy whose future is looking apocalyptic.



INSTANT EXPERT

Aaron Sorkin

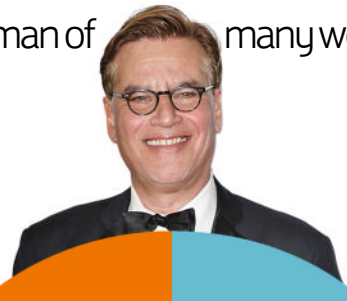
A man of many words...

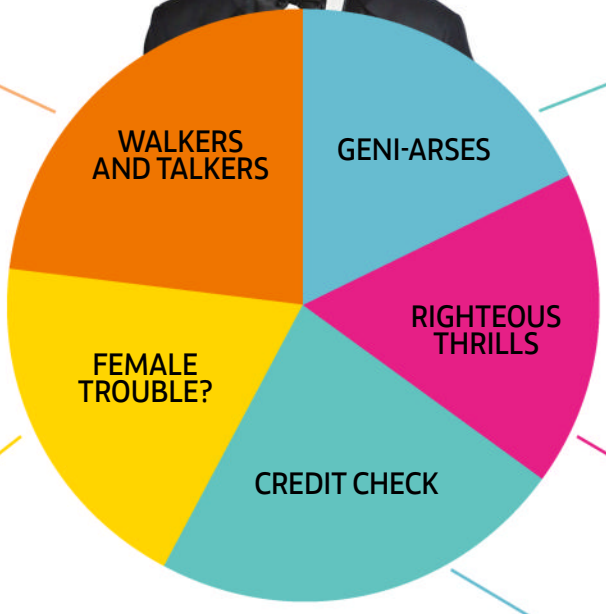


How do you know you are watching an Aaron Sorkin film or TV show? Well, a good rule of thumb is to check whether its characters are delivering quick-fire dialogue while striding purposefully down a corridor. It's become such a signature trope that Sorkin even spoofed it on *30 Rock* with Tina Fey – although he insists its genesis (in the pilot episode of *The West Wing*) was "simply a way to add visual interest to a visual medium I only really use aurally".



Equality reigns. From C.J. Cregg in *The West Wing* and MacKenzie McHale in *The Newsroom* to the loyal Joanna Hoffman in *Steve Jobs*, Sorkin's women characters are generally just as intelligent and high-functioning as their male counterparts. Yet they can also display levels of clumsiness and incompetence that have led some commentators to accuse him of being just as much of a misogynist as Mark Zuckerberg in the first 10 minutes of *The Social Network*.



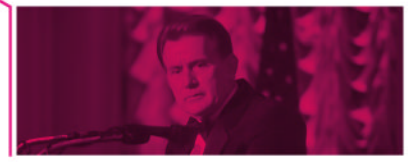




Sorkin may be a high-profile wordsmith, but he's also worked under the radar. While struggling to hatch his own ideas, he worked as a script doctor, polishing such Bruckheimer blockbusters as *Enemy Of The State* and *The Rock* ("Basically they wanted some snappy dialogue for Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage"). But his first uncredited rewrite was on *Schindler's List*, "where no one is looking for snappy dialogue"...



Few screenwriters have explored the prodigiously talented outcast as fulsomely as Sorkin, whose work often features single-minded, driven geniuses whose Achilles' heel is their lack of empathy and interpersonal skills. Toby Ziegler in *The West Wing*, Peter Brand in *Moneyball* and Mark Zuckerberg in *The Social Network* are all manifestations of a type embodied by Michael Fassbender's Steve Jobs: know-it-alls whose superiority complexes often breed an icy disdain for lesser mortals.



Unashamedly liberal in word and deed, Sorkin has rarely missed an opportunity to preach an eloquently righteous message through one of his charismatic mouthpieces. "I want the truth!" demands Tom Cruise's military lawyer in *A Few Good Men*, and his creator has never been scared to have the likes of Martin Sheen's *West Wing* president Josiah Bartlet and *The Newsroom*'s Will McAvoy (Jeff Daniels) set us straight with the same morally forthright rectitude. **NS**

Key movies



A FEW GOOD MEN
1992 ★★★★

Sorkin enjoyed his first taste of big-screen success with this adaptation of his 1989 stage play, the source of perhaps his most-quoted line of dialogue ("You can't handle the truth!").



THE WEST WING
1999-2006 ★★★★★

Penning 1995's *The American President* gave Sorkin a yen to explore the Oval Office further, creating this multi-Emmy-nominated drama; he wrote nearly every episode of the first four seasons.



THE SOCIAL NETWORK
2010 ★★★★★

A meditation on the early days of Facebook that uses Mark Zuckerberg's brainchild as a cue for a saga of ambition, avarice and betrayal that feels both contemporary and Shakespearean.



STEVE JOBS
2015 ★★★★★

No one but Aaron Sorkin would have had the balls to distill the Apple pioneer's life down to a three-act drama about the blistering white heat of creativity and the bystanders it burns.

Vital statistics

5 cameos in films/shows he's written

155 episodes of *The West Wing*, 1999-2006

385 pages in *The American President*'s first draft

2 Oscar noms (one win, for *The Social Network*)

PA

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'Superheroes are just characters around which greater tales can be told'

RANT

Is it just me?

...or do we need more superhero films, not fewer? *asks Matt Looker*

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR non-comic-book fans. While it is a golden age of cinema for those of us who, ahem, marvel at crime-fighting billionaires, invincible aliens and funny-talking space Vikings, there are plenty who see the sudden glut of (wo)men in capes, tights and suits of armour as a dull prospect, spelling the demise of originality in movies. But are superheroes really overpowering the schedules? And would it really be the end of the world, of our shared universe, if they were?

Firstly, with all the fan-baiting hype and speculation that occurs, it's easy to forget that only three superhero movies were released theatrically in 2015 (for comparison's sake, there were at least nine spy movies released in the same year). But yes, there's a lot more on the way, with 24 superhero movies flying, swinging or teleporting into action between now and 2020. That's a Hulk-sized proportion of all the blockbusters currently in the pipeline.

The problem, however, is in considering 'the superhero movie' as its own genre. It isn't. It's a platform. A springboard, if you will. It's a signal shining in the night sky calling for other genres to pitch in and help guide the mission at hand.

Just look at how Marvel has positioned its solo films recently: *Ant-Man* was a heist movie; *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* was a political thriller; *Guardians Of The Galaxy* was a bonkers space adventure. Even *Fantastic Four* flirted briefly – albeit unsuccessfully – with body horror.

Because these other, more closely defined genres suited the story that needed to be told at the time. Yes, they're all linked by superhumans with superpowers and super abs, but these are really just characters – strong role models even – around which greater tales can be told, about anything, in any style. Seriously, who doesn't have their fingers crossed for one day seeing an X-Men musical?

Of course, we mostly just get action spectacle of the highest order – but when was that such a bad thing? With superstrength, superspeed, shapeshifting powers and whatever it is that Vision does, superhero movies allow Hollywood to showcase the very best of its own abilities. They allow us to see the most special of special effects and, with moviemaking tech finally matching up to all possibilities in the pages of comic-books, they are limited only by the imagination of the extreme wealth of talent involved (not to mention the extreme wealth of the studio financing them).

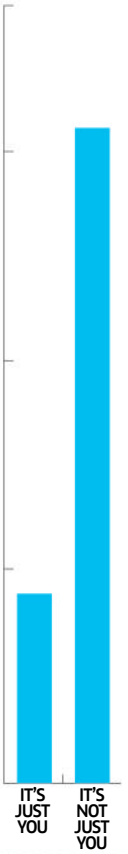


And their adamantium claws have barely scratched the surface. There may be overfamiliar tropes emerging – yes, we don't need to see another climactic aerial assault any time soon – but superhero movies are still in their relative origin stages. There are decades of creativity and storytelling still to be found in comic books, and if Hollywood is looking to do even better and bolder things on the big screen, it should be using this largely untapped resource even more than it already does. Or is it just me?

Share your reaction at www.gamesradar.com/totalfilm or on Facebook and Twitter.

OFFICE-OMETER

The *TF* staff verdict is in!



LAST MONTH...

In *TF*243, Kevin Harley argued that *Star Trek Into Darkness* needs no apologies. You respond...

JUSTIN JOHN CARROLL
It's a legitimate Enterprise.

AJ BLACK
Got a horrible feeling when *Beyond* drops, people are going to look back and go "*STID* wasn't that bad after all, was it?"

ROBERT JOHN STAMBROW
Awful films. A franchise ruined by someone who's in the process of ruining another.

LISA GRAASTEN
I hate that film. Loved the first one, but tragedy? NO. Just NO.

GARETH BAIRD
Yeah, it has some issues but not as many as the internet would have you believe.

TIM HANDS
The movie is *Star Trek* in name only.

ROBERT STEWART ASBURY
The only shame is Spock's long "Khaaaaaaaan!" A cheesy mistake.

JIM YAGER
I think that haters gonna hate, hate, hate. Shake it off.



SEAN RYAN O'LEARY
If *Wrath Of Khan* is a classy bottle of red wine, *STID* is a six-pack of beer with pizza. Both enjoyable in their own way but it's the vintage that lasts. J.J. Abrams made *Trek* appeal to a wider audience.



Window cleaning budget cuts had hit Nakatomi hard.

Raising the roof

DIE HARD | Ho Ho Hose...

JOHN MCTIERNAN'S PEERLESS siege movie takes such care embedding us in the pitched battle between smartass New York City cop John McClane (Bruce Willis) and urbane Euro thief Hans Gruber (Alan Rickman), that when the towering Nakatomi Plaza blows its top, you truly feel the heat...



1 McClane discovers that the Plaza roof is wired to blow, but Karl (Alexander Godunov) waylays him. Gruber sends up the hostages for rescue. It's a double cross.



4 As the FBI swing around, McClane ties a fire hose around his waist and jumps off the roof, which explodes. He slams into the window of the 30th floor.



2 FBI Agents Johnson (Robert Davi) and Johnson (Grand L. Bush) whiz through the deserted streets by helicopter. Estimated collateral: "Twenty, 25 per cent of the hostages, tops." They can live with that.



5 Still suspended, McClane shoots away the glass, and wallops down on the floor. When the firehose reel finally falls, dragging him towards the abyss, he manages to untie himself just in time.



3 Having bested Karl, McClane shoots Uli (Al Leong), the robber guarding the roof, and scares the hostages downstairs by firing in the air. The FBI helicopters target him and miss.



6 McClane goes to save Holly (Bonnie Bedelia) as the helicopter crashes. Outside Deputy Chief Robinson (Paul Gleason) deadpans: "We're gonna need some more FBI guys, I guess..." **Matt Glasby**

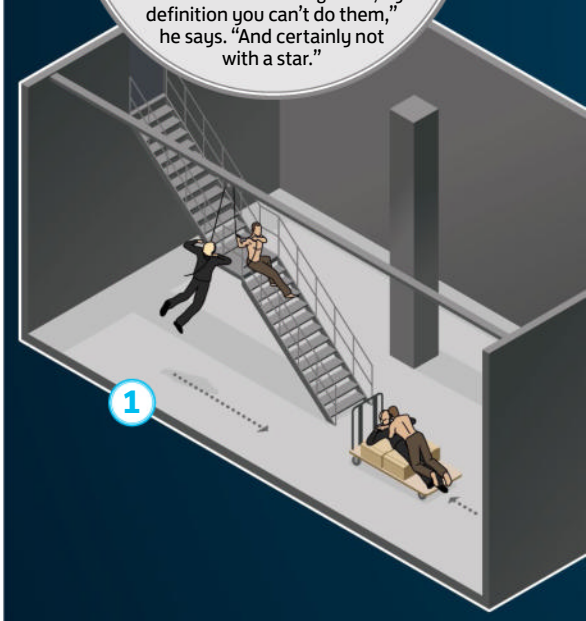
***Die Hard* is available on DVD, Blu-ray and Digital HD now.**

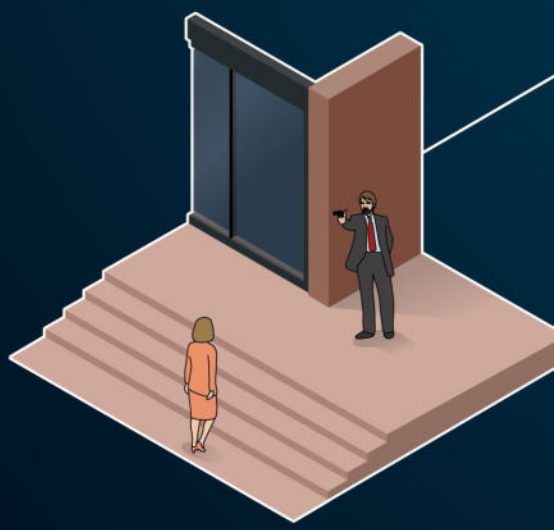
THE BOOK

Inspired by a dream he had after watching *The Towering Inferno*, Roderick Thorp's 1979 source novel *Nothing Lasts Forever* was a sequel to his 1966 book *The Detective*. When producer Larry Gordon saw the explosive front cover, he said, "I don't need to read it, buy it!" Screenwriters Steven E. de Souza and Jeb Stuart cleaved closely to the text, though its hero is older and its outlook bleaker – for instance, Thorp's conflicted cop is forced to kill female terrorists.

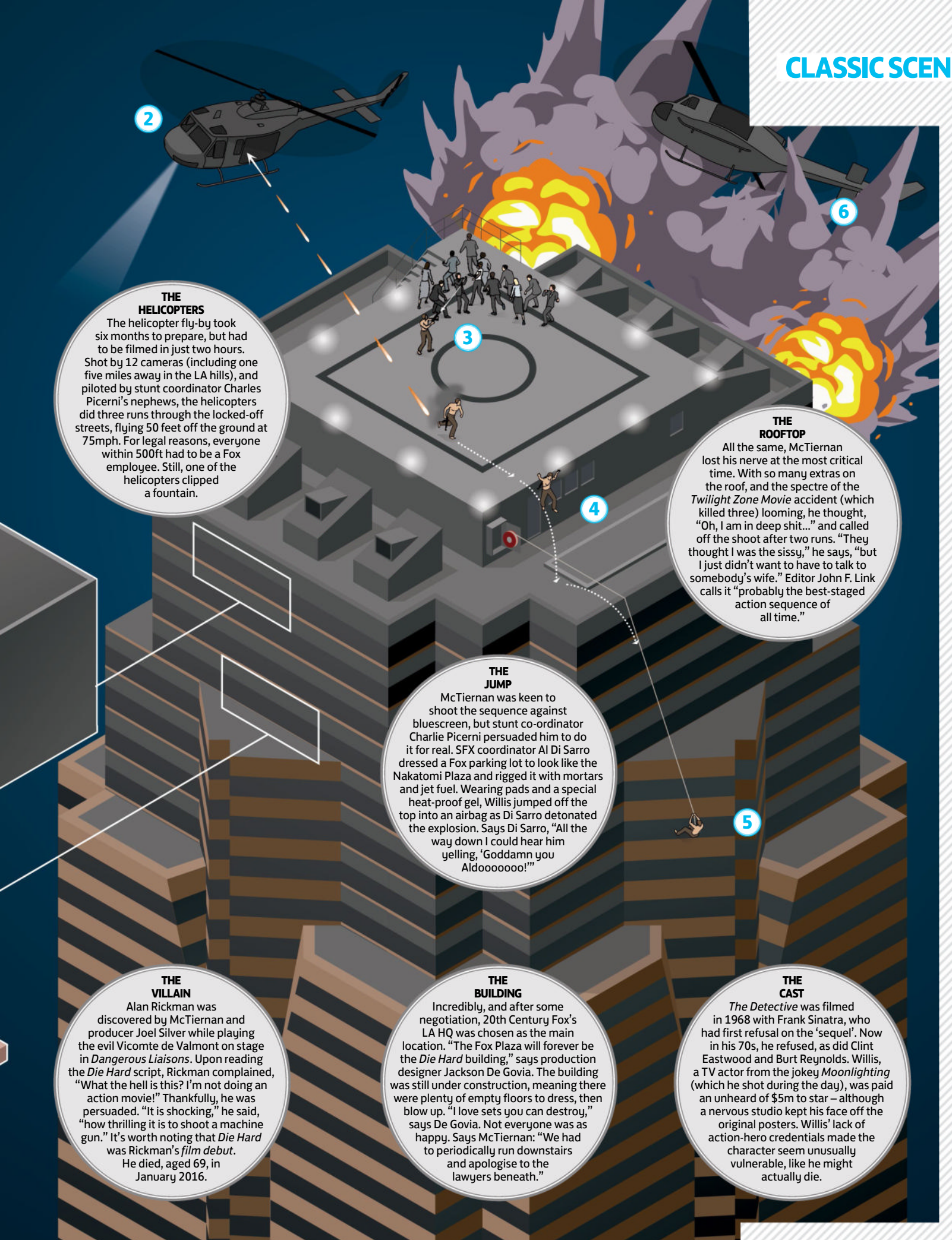
THE STUNTS

The window was made of specially tempered glass – the production used $130,000 worth in total. For the firehose gag, Bruce was pulled across the soundstage floor on silicon pads by the crew. Although Willis and Rickman did some of their own stunts ("Every day, I felt like I had been in a fight," says the former), McTiernan insists they were never at risk. "If the stunts are dangerous, by definition you can't do them," he says. "And certainly not with a star."





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THE HELICOPTERS
The helicopter fly-by took six months to prepare, but had to be filmed in just two hours. Shot by 12 cameras (including one five miles away in the LA hills), and piloted by stunt coordinator Charles Picerni's nephews, the helicopters did three runs through the locked-off streets, flying 50 feet off the ground at 75mph. For legal reasons, everyone within 500ft had to be a Fox employee. Still, one of the helicopters clipped a fountain.

THE ROOFTOP
All the same, McTiernan lost his nerve at the most critical time. With so many extras on the roof, and the spectre of the *Twilight Zone Movie* accident (which killed three) looming, he thought, "Oh, I am in deep shit..." and called off the shoot after two runs. "They thought I was the sissy," he says, "but I just didn't want to have to talk to somebody's wife." Editor John F. Link calls it "probably the best-staged action sequence of all time."

THE JUMP
McTiernan was keen to shoot the sequence against bluescreen, but stunt co-ordinator Charlie Picerni persuaded him to do it for real. SFX coordinator Al Di Sarro dressed a Fox parking lot to look like the Nakatomi Plaza and rigged it with mortars and jet fuel. Wearing pads and a special heat-proof gel, Willis jumped off the top into an airbag as Di Sarro detonated the explosion. Says Di Sarro, "All the way down I could hear him yelling, 'Goddamn you Aldooooooo!'"

THE VILLAIN
Alan Rickman was discovered by McTiernan and producer Joel Silver while playing the evil Vicomte de Valmont on stage in *Dangerous Liaisons*. Upon reading the *Die Hard* script, Rickman complained, "What the hell is this? I'm not doing an action movie!" Thankfully, he was persuaded. "It is shocking," he said, "how thrilling it is to shoot a machine gun." It's worth noting that *Die Hard* was Rickman's *film debut*. He died, aged 69, in January 2016.

THE BUILDING
Incredibly, and after some negotiation, 20th Century Fox's LA HQ was chosen as the main location. "The Fox Plaza will forever be the *Die Hard* building," says production designer Jackson De Govia. The building was still under construction, meaning there were plenty of empty floors to dress, then blow up. "I love sets you can destroy," says De Govia. Not everyone was as happy. Says McTiernan: "We had to periodically run downstairs and apologise to the lawyers beneath."

THE CAST
The Detective was filmed in 1968 with Frank Sinatra, who had first refusal on the 'sequel'. Now in his 70s, he refused, as did Clint Eastwood and Burt Reynolds. Willis, a TV actor from the jokey *Moonlighting* (which he shot during the day), was paid an unheard of $5m to star – although a nervous studio kept his face off the original posters. Willis' lack of action-hero credentials made the character seem unusually vulnerable, like he might actually die.

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON PICKERSGILL/ACUTE GRAPHICS

60 SECOND SCREENPLAY



TF saves you a night out every month. This issue: we tear strips off The Revenant...



FADE IN:

EXT: A MILLION FRICKIN' MILES FROM THE NEAREST HEATED SOUNDSTAGE. Nineteenth-century trapper LEONARDO DICAPRIO, his teenage son FORREST GOODLUCK and the cast of *Duck Dynasty* hunt wildlife, stopping to build snow caricatures of the director when they think he's not looking.

FORREST GOODLUCK
Is it the bear scene yet? Can I have a go on your gun? Isn't that your winnebago parked behind a tree? Why are you making a 'shush' face?

The 10-hour tracking shot the DOP spent all night prepping is rudely interrupted by arrows zinging from every direction.

WILL POULTER
Argh! I thought this was going to be all navel-gazey Terry Malick nature porn, not this Hawkeye bullshit!

TOM HARDY
Something something goddamn something something goddamn goddamnery!

FORREST GOODLUCK
This is the last 'weekend in the country' I'm spending with you Dad! Also, 'Hugh Glass' sounds like 'Huge Ass'.

Narrowly escaping death, LEONARDO decides to unwind with a spot of bear-bothering..

MAMA BEAR
Oi! Stay away from my kids! I'll get that *Spotlight* lot on to you!

The grizzly gives LEO a state-of-the-art mauling.

MAMA BEAR
...So is he awake or dreaming or what at the end of *Inception*? Kids wanna know. Tell me and I'll only chew one bum cheek off.

LEO shoots the grizzly; the others wait until the special effects have come to a complete stop before getting out the band aids.

DOMNHALL GLEESON
Well, that's going to leave a bit of a scab! Someone should stay with him; I'll chuck you 100 quid for every major organ failure you manage to sit through. Tom, I take it that marble-gargling sound means 'Me, sir!'

TOM waits till everyone's gone, then tries to smother LEO. Then kills FORREST. Then dumps LEO in a grave. But at least he doesn't leave his litter behind; looking at you, WILL POULTER.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO
[*Climbing out*] Honestly, I thought they'd never go. It's the Return Of The Leo Dead, bitches! Yeah!

INT: NICE, COSY FORT; STILL NO FLIPPIN' SIGN OF CRAFT SERVICES, MIND

DOMNHALL GLEESON
OK Tom, explain clearly to me what happened. Actually, probably better if you file a written report for this one...

Underscoring the film's uncompromising realism, LEO is visited by his flying dead wife.

FLYING DEAD WIFE
Whee! I'm Birdman! Oh, cheer up; there's nothing wrong with you some Berocca and a bit of raw bison heart wouldn't fix!

Bored with his old injuries, LEO decides to get some new ones by riding off a cliff. He brings new meaning to the phrase 'horse blanket', rising the next day relaxed, refreshed and stinking like a knacker's yard.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO
Wow, look at all this natural splendour. [*30 mins later*] My god, so much untamed beauty! [*One hour later*] If I see one more snowy vista I'm going to stick icicles in my eyes.

LEO writes incriminating graffiti about TOM on a cave wall. And draws a few giant smiling willies, obvs.

DOMHNALL GLEESON
Leo! OK, you can help me hunt Tom; have you got any spilt intestines we can use as a lasso?

The three men make the scenery look like a Christmas card that's been used to mop an abattoir floor.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO
Sorry Tom, did you say "Urgh" or "Bleurgh"? Honestly man, you make Bane sound like Keira Knightley!

DEAD FLYING WIFE
I have a question… with all the splashing in freezing rivers, how come everyone's bone dry?!? Forget 'back from the dead', more like 'back from the launderette'!

FIN

WORDS: MATTHEW LEYLAND

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